

Wall, Charles William

An examination of the ancient orthography of the Jews, and of the original
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Wall

THE PROPAGATION OF ALPINE

AND OTHER PROSODY

THOMAS J. B. JONES

1878

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ON
THE PROPAGATION OF ALPHABETS
AND OTHER PHONETIC SYSTEMS
THROUGHOUT EASTERN ASIA;
AND ON
THE VAST INFERIORITY OF IDEAGRAPHIC WRITING,
AS DISPLAYED IN ITS EFFECTS UPON HUMAN LEARNING.

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AN EXAMINATION

OF THE

ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE JEWS

IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE

THE FIRST OF THE HEBREW BOOKS

THE PROPAGATION OF THE JEWS

IN THE SECOND

AND OTHER PROTESTANT

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AN EXAMINATION
OF THE
ANCIENT
ORTHOGRAPHY OF THE JEWS,
AND OF
THE ORIGINAL STATE
OF
THE TEXT OF THE HEBREW BIBLE.

PART THE SECOND,
ON
THE PROPAGATION OF ALPHABETS
AND OTHER PHONETIC SYSTEMS THROUGHOUT EASTERN ASIA ;
AND ON
THE VAST INFERIORITY OF IDEAGRAPHIC WRITING,
AS DISPLAYED IN ITS EFFECTS UPON HUMAN LEARNING.

By CHARLES WILLIAM WALL, D. D.,
SENIOR FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, AND PROFESSOR OF HEBREW IN THE UNIVERSITY OF
DUBLIN.

VOL. III.

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AN EXAMINATION
OF THE
ORIGIN AND
PROGRESS
OF THE
JEWISH
RELIGION
IN THE
ORIGINAL STATE

DUBLIN: PRINTED AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS,
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ADVERTISEMENT.

WHEREVER, in the ensuing pages, the *present* time is referred to, 1840 is the year intended; as I had expected that, before its termination, this volume, containing the remainder of my second Essay, would have been published. I shall now proceed, without further delay, to prepare for public inspection a fuller developement of a principle, already touched upon briefly; by means of which, if I succeed in establishing its justness, by far the greater number of the discrepancies that have hitherto appeared to subsist between the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint version of it, will be all at once removed.

TRIN. COLL. DUBLIN,
March 15, 1841.

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FOR THE RECORD

PART THE SECOND

CONTINUATION
OF
PART THE SECOND.

1841

THE HISTORY OF ALABAMA

BY JAMES M. SMITH

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME THE SECOND

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CHAPTER X. THE ALABAMA RIVER

PART II.

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OF THE CHINESE WRITING.

AGE OF CHINESE PHONETIC SIGNS LIMITED BY ME AT FIRST TOO CLOSELY—UNDUE PREFERENCE WHICH IS GIVEN TO THE CHINESE GRAPHIC SYSTEM—PHONETIC USE OF SIGNS NOT DISCOVERED BY THE CHINESE—SOME ACCOUNT OF THE HING-CHING PHONETIC SIGNS—THE JAPANESE, TONQUINESE, COREAN METHODS OF READING CHINESE—HUMAN ORIGIN OF ALPHABETS DISPROVED BY CHINESE EXAMPLE—ARTFUL EXPEDIENT FOR CONCEALING A FATAL DEFECT OF CHINESE WRITING—THE SEVERAL MODES, ALL DEFECTIVE, OF RECORDING CHINESE NAMES—COMPARISON OF CHINESE AND EGYPTIAN DESIGNATIONS OF NAMES—FAILURE OF THE ATTEMPTS TO MAKE OUT A CHINESE ORIGIN OF PHONETIC SIGNS—THE SUPERIOR SIGNS OF THE CHINESE DERIVED FROM INDIAN WRITING—THIS CLASS OF SIGNS DERIVED ALSO IN PART FROM THE TIBETAN SYSTEM—THEIR SYLLABIC SIGNS OF FOREIGN, AND PROBABLY OF HINDU EXTRACTION—LIMIT TO THE AGE OF CONFUCIUS, FROM THE NATURE OF HIS WRITING—SEVERAL ACQUISITIONS DERIVED BY THE CHINESE FROM THE INDIANS—LOGARITHMIC THEFT OF THE CHINESE DETECTED BY MR. BABBAGE.

IN inquiring into the origin of the different kinds of phonetic use to which the Chinese ideagrams are now occasionally ap-

plied, I shall not take into account the share which Syriac writing may have had in their production ; because, although analogy warrants the presumption, that the employment of an alphabetic mode of designation in China for a length of time,—and that too by the ministers of a religion which had made its way to the court, and was professed by several of the successive sovereigns of the country ;—must have exerted considerable influence on the graphic practice of the Chinese, yet there is no property of their present writing which can be fixed upon as exclusively the effect of that influence. The direction, indeed, from right to left, in which they read their columns and the characters in their horizontal lines, may, very likely, have been chosen from observation of the Syriac method of writing : but still it is possible that they originally adopted this direction merely from the suggestion of their own fancy ; and, if they formerly derived any classes of phonetic signs from a familiarity with the Syriac alphabet, these have most probably been wholly swept away from their graphic system, in like manner as every vestige of the history of the Syriac Church in China has been worn out and effaced from their annals. All, however, that is essential to the support of my views, is to trace home to some alphabet of known origin the superior, or nearly alphabetic part of their present phonetic practice ; and this part can, I apprehend, be completely proved to have sprung, immediately or remotely, from the Sanscrit system of letters. I hope, indeed, still further *ex abundanti*, to show, with a high degree of probability, that the whole of the phonetic use they now make of characters, is derived from the same system ; but if, notwithstanding, the reader should refer any portion of it to the remains of an influence formerly exerted on their writing by the Syriac alphabet, I have no wish to contest the point with him ;—a point upon which, in fact, certainty is not attainable, and which, therefore, must be left open to each to decide according to his own judgment. At all events, the arguments against the Chinese origin of any part of the phonetic practice in question, and for the Hindu origin of its superior part, are of the strongest kind ; and this being

the case, it is not very material to determine, to the operation of what particular alphabet, or alphabets, the remainder of it is to be ascribed.

At my entrance upon this subject I am bound to acknowledge that, in the investigation of it which has been given in the first Part of my work, I assigned too narrow a limit to the age of the phonetic writing of the Chinese. Du-Halde and all the older European authors who turned their attention to the graphic system of that people, describe the characters employed in it as understood by nations of quite different languages; and as it was, according to those authors, intelligible independently of any knowledge of the Chinese tongue, I thence inferred that it must have been wholly ideagraphic in their time, and, consequently, that phonetic signs could not have been introduced into it till after the date of the latest of their accounts, or till within the last hundred years.

If the Chinese characters served to convey a precise meaning, the above inference would, I submit, have been conclusive. Thus, for instance, supposing a stranger to our mode of writing numbers, was told that Frenchmen who were totally ignorant of the English language, could yet understand our numeric representations as clearly and as perfectly as they are known to ourselves, he would from this circumstance alone be fully justified in inferring that the expressions in question were entirely ideagraphic. But no such clearness and precision belong to the Chinese writing as to the combinations of signs here referred to; and the consequence turns out to be, that an infusion of phonetic marks into the composition of some portion of its characters, as subordinate ingredients, renders it scarcely more vague to the neighbouring nations than it is to the Chinese themselves; although the use of those ingredients must evidently be unknown to every person unacquainted with the language with which they are immediately connected. The exceeding vagueness of the Chinese style which this explanation presupposes, can be proved from various considerations, some of which shall be enlarged upon in the course of next chapter.

From the nature, therefore, of Chinese writing, as described by the early missionaries, all that fairly follows is, that it was, not indeed entirely, but for by far the greater part, ideagraphic in their time ;—a consequence that in like manner applies to it at the present day : for most of the nations who make use of this writing, do still read it, each of them, in their own language.

The same qualification should be annexed to the conclusion to be drawn from the silence of the earlier missionaries respecting the species of compound signs, formed partly of phonetic elements, which have been above alluded to, and will presently be more fully considered. For, notwithstanding their abilities and diligence, a small proportion of those signs in Chinese writing may have escaped their observation ; but it is scarcely possible that a large one could. From the circumstance, therefore, of their having failed to notice compounds of this description, which are now found in the general text of Chinese documents, it cannot be justly deduced that such compounds were not in existence a hundred years ago, but only that they must have been very few in comparison with the entire number of the symbols then employed by the Chinese.

Another and far more easily observed use of phonetic signs, presented to us in the combinations of characters by means of which foreign names, consisting of more syllables than one, are in this system expressed, does not appear to have particularly engaged the attention of Europeans till their own names began to be so written by the Chinese,^a or at any rate till after the age of Du Halde ; and yet it certainly was applied many years before to the designation of Sanscrit appellations. Thus, to give a familiar example, the term *Brahman* has been long written by them

^a The manner in which the Chinese first distinguished Europeans in their writings, was by giving them Chinese names, which they could express by means of their characters in the same way as they did their own names. Thus Pere Verbiest is designated in their annals, at a date corresponding to the year of our era 1669, by three characters which are read *Nan-hoaï-gin* ; and this mode of designation was probably the one most usually employed with regard to Europeans, till after the time of Pere Gaubil.

with three characters which, without any reference to their several meanings, but only to the Chinese words for those meanings considered as mere syllables, are read *Po-lo-mun*. And, it may be added, the peculiarities of pronunciation necessary to be known in order to perceive the use made of the characters in this example,—namely, that the Chinese cannot approach nearer to the articulation of B than by P, nor to that of R than by L; as also that they are unable to combine two articulations in the commencement of the same syllable;—were noticed at an early period. But, nevertheless, Pere Gaubil, though he was an excellent Chinese scholar, and wrote within the last hundred years, has shown that he was not aware of the meaning of the specified combination, in the following passage of his account of the Chinese astronomy, edited by Pere Souciet. “*Hing-yun-lou* assure que les Bonzes *Po-lo-men*, durant le temps des *Tang*, se servoient fort des 4 points *Po*, *Ki*, &c. Or ces *Po-lo-men*, quels qu’ils fussent, passoient pour Bonzes, ou Religieux, ou gens qui gardoient tous le célibat; ainsi ce n’étoit pas des Juifs, ni des Mahométans.”—*Observations, &c. publiées par le P. Souciet*, tom. ii. p. 124. Now it can hardly be supposed that our author was unacquainted with the above-mentioned peculiarities of Chinese pronunciation, or that he did not know who the Brahmans were; and consequently, we might, without due consideration, be induced to infer from his ignorance of the signification attached to the combination of characters in question, either that such combinations were brought into use only a little before his time, or that the nature of their application had not been then as yet detected by Europeans;—a conclusion which is in both respects erroneous; as, in point of fact, the Jesuits had at least some knowledge of this way of expressing names above two hundred years ago. It may, however, I apprehend, be fairly collected from the passage just quoted, that when it was written, the mode of designation alluded to was much less frequently employed than it is at present.

To return to the point which led to these last observations;—I admit that, when I was investigating the antiquity of

the phonetic part of the Chinese writing, I should not have trusted to inferential reasoning alone in so obscure a subject; and, before I came to a decision, I ought to have sought for the more recent, as well as the more direct information which would have guarded me from the error I then fell into. But the fact is, when I wrote the first Part of this work, I was not aware that information of either kind was within my reach. I too readily took it for granted that, after the confidence of the Chinese government had been withdrawn from the missionaries, the national jealousies of the mandarins, and their antipathy to Europeans, would have opposed an insurmountable barrier to the further progress of the inquiries which had been carried on under more favourable circumstances; and, in consequence, I was not as careful as I should otherwise have been, to consult modern publications on the subject. In spite, however, of all obstruction, fresh accounts of considerable interest have, I find, made their way of late years from China to Europe; and Dr. Morrison's excellent Dictionary, though composed under every disadvantage which illiberality could oppose to him, affords to the immediate study of Chinese writing assistance beyond what I could have expected. To qualify myself the better to resume the discussion of the Chinese case, I have for the last few years applied myself with diligence to both modes of research, whenever I could spare time from other and more pressing avocations. Debarred, indeed, as I have been by circumstances from the aid of oral instruction, I have made but little advance in the knowledge of the written language; but still even the very limited acquaintance with it to which I have been able to attain, has proved of use to me in this examination. What, however, I more rely on as available for the present purpose, and what I can more easily bring under the cognizance of my reader, are the results at which I have arrived from a comparison of several statements, of various ages, bearing on the question of the nature and value, as well of Chinese learning as of the writing through which it is conveyed;—results which, when occasion requires, are in the ensuing pages (in like man-

ner as in one of the preceding chapters of this Essay) supported by a direct reference to the writing itself.

Here I cannot avoid expressing my surprise at the extraordinary degree of prejudice in favour of the Chinese graphic system, which is displayed by numbers of the more recent writers on the subject, particularly by some of the French authors; as also at the apparent existence of a confederacy among them to extol this system quite beyond the standard of its real worth. I do not, however, attribute to these writers any deliberate intention to deceive the public; they may unconsciously have been biassed in their judgment by a variety of causes; and, besides, they themselves, in a great measure, supply materials by means of which their misrepresentations may be corrected. At all events it is not for me to analyze the motives of the witnesses whom I shall bring forward, but to extract the truth as well as I can from their evidence.

A striking instance of the undue preference which it is the fashion, with certain authors, to give to the Chinese symbols, will be found in the following passage of the introductory dissertation prefixed to M. Abel-Rémusat's treatise on the Tartar languages and alphabets, in which he endeavours to make out, not only that these characters act as a preservative of language, but also that they are a more efficacious instrument for the purpose than even alphabetic writing. "Il est assez naturel de supposer que les affixes qui marquent les rapports des noms, le nombre, le temps, le mode et la personne dans les verbes, ont primitivement été autant de particules, d'adverbes, de pronoms, qui ont fini par se lier et se fondre avec le thème; que *amavimus*, par exemple, est un mot composé du radical *am*, exprimant l'idée d'*amour*, avec les signes réunis du passé, de la première personne, et du pluriel, comme si l'on disait, *am-cessare-ego-plures*. Si cela est, l'espèce de crase qui, en rapprochant ces divers élémens, a donné naissance aux formes grammaticales, a dû avoir lieu plus facilement dans les langues où rien ne s'opposoit à la tendance naturelle que les mots ont à se réunir et à s'abrégier, c'est-à-dire, dans les langues sans écriture. Rien

n'empêche que, dans des idiomes grossiers, cette opération n'ait lieu plusieurs fois, c'est-à-dire, qu'à un mot où se trouvent déjà exprimées les particularités de temps ou de personnes, on n'ajoute encore, par ignorance, de nouveaux adverbess ou de nouveaux pronoms. C'est ainsi, et peut-être seulement ainsi, qu'on pourroit expliquer le prodigieux allongement des mots dans certains dialectes de peuplades sauvages, en Asie ou en Amérique, et la multiplicité des formes grammaticales dans des langues qui n'ont pas de littérature, et qui paroissent n'avoir jamais été cultivées, comme celles des Basques, des Lapons, et des Groënländais. L'écriture alphabétique, qui n'est qu'une peinture de la parole, n'oppose que peu d'obstacles à cette marche. En écrivant les unes après les autres les portions de mots qui concouroient à un sens unique, ou a été conduit naturellement à les réunir et à les confondre ; mais l'écriture hiéroglyphique, ou pour mieux dire symbolique, n'offroit pas autant de facilité. Le thème des noms et des verbes doit y conserver des formes plus tranchées : les signes de convention qu'on peut écrire après, pour exprimer les particularités de l'action, ne pourroient s'y joindre sans le défigurer. On est contraint de s'en tenir à les écrire séparément, et on n'en est que plus disposé à les supprimer, quand ils ne sont pas rigoureusement nécessaires. Voilà pourquoi le chinois a pu passer, en un certain sens, pour monosyllabique, et voilà aussi une des raisons qui ont empêché les premiers auteurs qui ont écrit dans cette langue, de multiplier, autant qu'on l'a fait dans les autres langues, les signes des relations grammaticales."—*Discours Préliminaire*, pp. xxi. xxii.

The observations in the first part of this extract show discernment ; it is quite true that the tendency of speech is to blend together the elements of the inflexions of words ; and it is also true that, in the cited example of *amavimus*, alphabetic writing has presented no obstacle to this tendency. But why so ? Because the materials entering the grammatical formatives of the Latin language, had been completely amalgamated, before such writing had been brought to bear against their aggregation. But if M. Abel-Remusat had extended his views a

little farther, and considered languages that were nearer their incipient state when first submitted to the influence of this powerful agent, he would have found its operation much more effective. Thus, for instance, in Hebrew several of the inflexions are preserved in so distinct a form, that their original elements can be easily discerned.^a His strangest mistake, however, is involved in the superiority he attributes to hieroglyphic agency, in a case in which this agency is particularly defective. For the modifications of our thoughts cannot be separated from the thoughts themselves, as distinctly as the inflexions of words can from their roots; and the species of graphic signs which is more immediately connected with our thoughts than with our words, must necessarily partake of this comparative indistinctness. We may, indeed, analyze the meaning of an inflexion; and the parts of it which we can express by distinct words, we can also express by distinct ideagrams: but there always is still remaining, a modification of the principal thought which is inseparable from the thought itself, and which, therefore, cannot be separately represented by an ideagraphic character. Now certainly that kind of writing which does not adequately and distinctly express the meaning of verbal inflexions, cannot justly be said to contribute to the preservation of the distinctness of those inflexions.

^a This indication of the comparative infancy of Hebrew (with respect to, not its roots, but its inflexions) in the age when Moses lived, affords very decisive proof of some miraculous interference with language having actually taken place about the time recorded in the Bible. For the earlier history of the Jews affords no instance of their collision with foreigners, of such a nature as that out of it a new dialect could spring up in a natural way. They were, indeed, in Egypt reduced to a state of the most abject subjection to a people of a different language; but they were not blended with that people, who, in fact, abhorred all intercourse with them; so that they were suffered to remain in a collective body, associating only among themselves. Without, therefore, such interference as I allude to, having occurred near the time in question, the Hebrew tongue would have been an old one, before it was placed under the action of alphabetic writing, and of course no traces of the elements of its inflexions would have been left. See this point more fully canvassed near the close of the first Part of this work.

The example which M. Abel-Remusat has himself selected, may perhaps serve to make the foregoing remarks more easily understood. Ideagraphic writing can be employed with the same signification as either the entire word *amavimus* or its root; but not with exactly the same as its inflexion. Such writing may, indeed, supply signs for ideas which enter into the meaning of *avimus*, and correspond to *cessare*, *ego*, *plures*; but these ideas, when so expressed, become completely independent thoughts, and not at all, either in their separate or conjoint state, modifications of thought. Laying aside, however, the consideration of this great defect, and admitting that a hieroglyphic reader may from the context collect, that the three above-mentioned signs are to be transferred from their proper signification to the denoting of some modification of love, still how infinitely inferior are they to the alphabetic termination of the word *amavimus* in the precise expression of that modification! Hence in the Chinese writing subsidiary signs of this sort are generally left out, as being quite inadequate to the use assigned to them; and only a bare naked representation of the principal thoughts is submitted to the reader, which he is obliged to modify as well as his judgment may enable him, by the help of the context. To this abstract form of the writing M. Abel-Remusat attributes the monosyllabic nature of the language; and the cause he has stated for the peculiarity is, I believe, the principal, if not the only one, to which it is assignable.^a But it is to be observed that, even according to his own view of the case, the effect produced by this species of writing has been, not to render the inflexions of words distinct in the composition of their elements, but to cut them off altogether; and to retain

^a There is abundance of evidence to prove that the learned in China think more in their graphic characters than in their words; and, as it is natural that the signs of thought which more frequently occur to the mind, should exert an influence over those less in use, it is not unlikely that, in the course of time, the writing of the Chinese may have affected the nature of their language, and have had a considerable share in producing its present appearance.

very few, if any, of those elements in a separate state, so that they supply in a most imperfect manner the place of the formatives for which they are substituted. Here, then, is a very strong instance of the extreme prejudice in favour of Chinese writing, which may be noticed in the works of modern date of several authors. This writing is here praised for an influence upon language which it does not at all exert; and a preference is thence given to it over alphabetic designations, which are really efficacious in this very respect, namely, in preserving the distinctness of the inflexions of words; and which, in the precise expression of the modifications of thought corresponding to those inflexions, have an immeasurable superiority over all ideagrams whatever.

But to proceed with the subject more immediately before me;—from the concession with which I set out in this chapter, I can no longer insist on the phonetic application of characters at present in use among the Chinese, having commenced so recently as would warrant the attributing its origin to imitation of European practice; still, however, I trust I shall be able to satisfy my reader, that it was first adopted by them subsequently to their intercourse with alphabetic writers from India, and grew out of that intercourse. This application of their ideagrams to the purposes of phonetic designation is of two kinds. In some instances they represent the monosyllables by which their symbols should be read, by signs for the beginnings and endings of those monosyllables, that is, by characters that are called Initials and Finals, but which, in this use of them, are virtually consonants and vowel-letters; in other instances they denote the articulate sounds that are, in like manner through the medium of the language, connected with their symbols, by single signs for each, that is, by syllabic signs. The former part of their phonetic practice,—the benefit of which is now confined to their dictionaries, and, still further, to a very limited class of those books,—discloses the mutilated and disfigured remnant of an alphabet of consonants and vowels, which when we come to trace to its foreign model and compare therewith, we shall per-

ceive how very low it has sunk beneath its original state. This great deterioration of the alphabet in question, in the hands of the Chinese, has arisen chiefly from their neglecting to use constantly the same characters with the same phonetic powers;—a neglect which, while it places in a very conspicuous light their total ignorance of the principle of alphabetic construction, has rendered the number of the characters of their system so indeterminate, that it scarcely is any longer entitled to the rank of an alphabet. The other and ruder mode of expressing articulate sounds, above alluded to as employed by this people, is shown to be more suited to their apprehension of the subject, by the circumstance of its beginning to get into more general use among them; and here their inconstancy in the phonetic application of the characters is still greater than in their management of the signs of the former description. The consequence is, that this part of their phonetic practice has produced a collection of syllabic signs so absolutely indeterminate in their number, as to fall, in the scale of phonetic writing, quite below the grade of even the very rudest and most imperfect syllabary.

The inattention of the Chinese to the simple, but important rule, of constantly using the same characters with the same powers, is, in reference to both kinds of their phonetic signs, attested by Dr. Morrison, in the Introduction to his Dictionary, as follows. “—no where, neither in dictionaries nor commentaries, do they confine themselves to determinate sets of characters for the Initials and Finals; which circumstance deprives the student of much of the benefit which would otherwise result from the plan. Even the Imperial Dictionary [written by order of the Emperor *Kang-he*] does not confine itself, in the body of the work, to the sets of characters given in its own tables. Some dictionaries are still published agreeably to the *old* mode of giving a single character, supposed to be better known, of the same pronunciation as that less known. But, in this case also, they do not confine themselves to the same character, as the sign of the same sound. They seem always to calculate on the student having learned to pronounce *several*

thousand characters, from the mouth of a master."—*Introd. to Dict.* p. vii.

Although this passage is entitled to the fullest credit, on the point in support of which it has been adduced, there is yet an opinion, incidentally expressed in it, against which I must beg to warn the reader. Dr. Morrison appears to have taken for granted (as, I confess, I also did myself, on my first view of the subject), in reliance on the statements made by the Chinese, that, in their phonetic use of characters, they commenced with syllabic signs, and thence advanced gradually to those employed with consonantal and vowel powers. Such, undoubtedly, would have been the course pursued by them, had invention, on their part, any share in the process; but several considerations serve to prove, that the direction of this course, from very nearly its commencement, must have been just the reverse of that which has been assigned. I admit that the alphabet from which, as shall presently be shown, they derived their notion of consonants and vowel-letters, supplied them also with abundant samples of syllabic signs, and that they must, in the first instance, have arrived at a conception of the former, through the latter class; but from the time of the formation of their system of Initials and Finals, their phonetic practice appears to have been constantly in a state of decline. The very passage just quoted affords an instance of their falling back upon the inferior kind of letters, where it states that they have, in some of the latest of their dictionaries, in order to represent the sounds with which the characters should be read, made choice of syllabic signs; and we have an example of their sinking still lower, and even descending from a phonetic to an ideagraphic application of their symbols, in their abandonment of the dictionaries called *tonic*,^a and the preference they have latterly given to those in

^a It is a curious coincidence between the tonic dictionaries of the Chinese and some Coptic lexicons, noticed in the first Part of this work, that in both, the arrangement of the graphic designations is settled by the terminations of the words they represent. The Coptic words being inflected at their com-

which the characters are arranged by means of the system of Radicals or Keys, rather than according to the vowel terminations of the words by which they are to be read. In proof of this deterioration of their practice, it will be sufficient to quote the following attestation of the same author. "There was much disagreement amongst the different authorities, and the difficulty of finding the characters [by the aid of their phonetic classification] was great; hence the writers of the dictionaries * * ^a *Tsze-hwuy*, and * * * *Ching-tsze-t'hung*, who published their works during the dynasty * *Ming*, reverted to the principle of the ancient arrangement [by the form and meaning of the characters], and the compilers of the Imperial Dictionary adhered to it."—*Introd. to Dict.* pp. vii. viii. Certainly, the mismanagement of vowel characters, on the part of the Chinese, must have been very gross, when it prevented them from seeing the great advantage of a phonetic classification, over one made by means of their very arbitrary and confused system of Keys. But their ignorance of the nature and relative value of phonetic signs is, perhaps, still more conspicuously exposed, by the decided preference they are now showing to the inferior class of such signs. For, in the very peculiar phonetic application of ideagrams (to be explained in the next ensuing paragraphs) which is at this moment spreading through the general text of their writing, they have not selected for the representation of syllables, combinations of Initials and Finals, but single cha-

mencement, the groups of letters with which they are expressed, are necessarily arranged by their terminations; as our written words are, for the opposite reason, by their initial letters. But the Chinese terms not being inflected at all, the characters would admit of a phonetic classification, depending on, either the beginnings, or the endings of the articulate sounds with which they are connected through the medium of the language.

^a Stars are above substituted for the Chinese characters which are inserted in the original passage of Dr. Morrison; and I shall venture to take the same liberty with subsequent quotations, when their meaning is not thereby obscured. But, whenever the course of my reasoning at all depends upon the shape of the symbols, engravings of them shall be given; according to the plan already adopted in the chapter respecting the Sino-Syriac Inscription.

racters, or, in effect, syllabic letters. Now, all the bungling and ignorance thus displayed, are very compatible with the supposition of the Chinese having received their notions of both kinds of letters, nearly at the same time, from imperfect observation of a foreign system; but not at all so, with that of their having attained to the use of the inferior kind, at a very remote period, by their own efforts of thought: for, if they had previously acquired such a degree of acquaintance with the nature of syllabic signs as the latter supposition necessarily implies, it is obvious that, on the higher class being presented to their notice by a teacher, they would have been in a condition to appreciate the value of that class far more than they now do. But, perhaps, the force of this remark will be better seen, after a more particular examination of the different sorts of phonetic signs which are employed by this people.

At present syllabic signs are not only used in China for the designation of foreign names, in the manner already noticed; but have also made their way into the general text of Chinese writing, as ingredients of compound characters of a very curious nature. These characters, called *hîng-chîng*,^a which M. Abel-Remusat translates *figurant le son*, are described by French authors as follows. Of the numerous characters which are read

^a This is their name according to the French mode of expressing its sound. Here I beg to apologize for the want of uniformity which may be observed in my representations of Chinese words. The fault has arisen from my quoting, sometimes from French, and sometimes from English authors; but, I hope, it will not be attended with any inconvenience to the reader, as the orthography which I have in each instance followed, is sufficiently indicated by the language of the writer from whom the quotation has been taken. In the French mode of writing the Chinese words, they are more usually marked with accents, and their number is thus increased to 1200; whereas, according to the English ordinary way of representing them, they amount only to 450. The marks selected by the missionaries to express the Chinese accents are four, viz. ^ ' ' ~; but they formerly employed five for the purpose, by distinguishing the first accent into two kinds, denoted by - and ^. I shall not detain the reader with an explanation of these accents, any further than to warn him, that their marks are not used with the same signification as they have in European writing.

by the same Chinese word, one which is in more familiar use than the rest, is divested of its proper signification, and applied to denote merely the articulate sound which is associated, in common, with them all (just as in the case of the selection of syllabic signs for the use of dictionaries, or for the expression of foreign proper names); and again the sound thus denoted, is restricted to any one of the meanings attached to it, by compounding with its newly chosen sign, the ideographic emblem of the next more general meaning under which that particular one is ranked. As for instance, the Chinese word, *li*, expresses, besides its other significations, a certain measure of length, as *mile* does with us; and the character of this signification being in more constant use than any of the others which are read by the same articulate sound, is selected to represent that sound. Suppose, then, it is wanted to denote a carp, which particular kind of fish is by the Chinese called *li*; this is done by joining to the character in question the ideographic sign of a fish, and the compound serves to signify a *li* fish, that is, a carp.

A very different account of the nature of these characters is given by Dr. Morrison, which unquestionably is correct with respect to some of them; but still, as I conceive, the French description must be admitted to be well founded as to others; because the compounds they have laid before us, are calculated to produce a very remarkable effect upon Chinese writing, which effect has actually been produced, and can scarcely be accounted for in any other way. Notwithstanding the natural tendency of every ideographic system to increase in the number of its terms,—a tendency which cannot be checked, except by the operation of some very powerful counteracting cause,—still the total amount of Chinese characters has of late years been considerably reduced, and is not at present above half what it was in the time of Du Halde. The statements digested by that author, represent them as exceeding 80,000, and as being continually on the increase; whereas they are not estimated by modern writers at more than 40,000. That they have greatly decreased in number, can also be proved in another way;

though the extent of the reduction does not come out the same ; probably from some inaccuracy in a former computation referred to in the following remark, which I shall not now detain the reader with correcting. From Du Halde's account it was deduced in the first Part of this work, that the average number of Chinese characters for each word of the language was fifty ; whereas at present it is less than thirty-four.^a Now, if no change had occurred in the graphic system of the Chinese, the great reduction shown in each of those ways to have taken place in the total amount of their characters, would be quite inexplicable ; but let us suppose compound signs agreeing with the description above taken from French authors, to have been introduced into the general text of this writing within the last hundred years, and the phenomenon under consideration can at once be accounted for in the plainest manner. To revert to the example already given ; it is evident that the Chinese can now express all the varieties of fish with which they are acquainted, by one common ideagram combined with different phonetic signs ; instead of using, as they formerly must have done, a different symbol for every different species of this genus. Hence it is obvious that the use of such characters has a tendency to reduce the total number of Chinese ideagrams ; and the more they are diffused in Chinese writing, the more sensible will this reduction become.

Dr. Morrison differs from M. Abel-Remusat in the first of the two Chinese symbols which express the name of the characters in question, the combination he employs being read by him *heae-shing*,^b and signifying, as I conceive, *adapted to the*

^a The Chinese words, their variation by accents being taken into account, are at present computed to amount to 1200 ; and the characters to 40,000. But the latter number is to the former as 100 to 3, or as $33\frac{1}{3}$ to 1. Every word of the language, therefore, at present has on an average rather more than thirty-three different meanings, which are ideagraphically expressed by as many different characters.

^b The difference upon this point between French and English authors, can only arise from the unsteadiness of the Chinese themselves in their naming of the class in question ; and the example serves to show how far they yet are dis-

the sound. But it is evident, notwithstanding, that the two authors mean to speak of the same class of signs, both because they virtually agree in the names and descriptions of all the rest of the six classes into which the Chinese characters are distributed, and because this is the only one which, according to either, contains in the elements of its graphic denomination any allusion to sound. The common term, however, in their names of this class, is understood by them in very different senses, Dr. Morrison explaining its meaning to be “the sound of the thing spoken of” (*Introduction to Dict.* p. ii.); which is evidently just as much an attribute of it as any other by which it is distinguished; and consequently the ingredient of a compound figure which denotes this sound is ideagraphically used. The French description is more specious, and it has the advantage of being to a certain extent proved well founded, by a remarkable alteration which has certainly taken place in Chinese writing, and which can hardly be otherwise accounted for; but it is not, as it would seem to be, the more recent of the two. For M. Abel-Remusat has, though without making any acknowledgment of the fact, taken his whole account of the matter,—even to the very examples which he has applied to its illustration,—from two Essays of Pere Cibot, published so long ago as the years 1782 and 1783 in the *Memoires, &c. par les Missionnaires de Pe-kin* (see vol. viii. p. 115, and vol. ix. p. 300); and which must have been written before August, 1780, the time of their author’s decease. P. Cibot was a very able Chinese scholar, and had devoted his attention most particularly to the nature and composition of the Chinese characters. Nothing, therefore, can more strongly show how very imperfectly the subject is understood, than the extreme difference, with respect to the most important of all the classes, which exists between two such men as this missionary and Dr. Morrison. P. Cibot, indeed, ex-

tant from the capability of constructing an alphabet, when, even in a division consisting of only six classes, they are unable to adhere constantly to the same set of graphic signs for the same class.

pressly admitted his inability to analyze the meaning and formation of the older Chinese symbols, in the following terms:—
“Je m’étois proposé d’abord de donner les images et symboles élémentaires tels qu’ils étoient dans l’antiquité; mais mes recherches m’ont appris, 1°. qu’il y en a plusieurs dont on n’a pas conservé les anciens caracteres; 2°. que plusieurs ont été écrits par les anciens de différentes manieres, et qu’on ne peut plus décider quelle est celle qui touche de plus près à leur origine; 3°. que les antiquaires ne sont pas d’accord sur leur nombre, ni même assez sur ce que représentent quelques-uns.”—*Missionnaires de Pe-kin*, tom. ix. p. 365. And the same admission, with respect to the structure of even the modern characters, is virtually made by Dr. Morrison, when, in speaking generally of all their classes, he observes that, “In tracing the derivation of the character, there is more of curiosity than utility. From the causes above mentioned, namely, abbreviations and additions for the sake of expedition or beauty of the character, the derivation is much obscured in the present form.”—*Introduc. to Dict.* p. ii. The discrepancy, however, between these authors, as to the elements of the characters more immediately under consideration, may to some extent be reduced, by subdividing the class into two kinds, agreeing, one of them, with the English, and the other, with the French description. It will, therefore, be convenient for the purpose of distinction, to appropriate the name employed by French writers, to that part of the class which accords with their account of the conformation of its terms.

The number of the characters of the *hîng-chîng* class is stated by P. Cibot to be very great. “—cette quatrieme classe est fort nombreuse, embrassant toutes les especes d’arbres, de plantes, d’oiseaux, d’insectes, d’animaux, de meubles, d’habits, de vases, &c.”—*Missionnaires de Pe-kin*, tom. viii. p. 116. But M. Abel-Remusat has gone still farther than his informant, in asserting that the characters in question make up at least half of the Chinese writing. “La plupart des noms des arbres, des plantes, des poissons, des oiseaux et d’une foule d’autres objets

qu'il eût été trop difficile de représenter autrement, sont désignés par des caractères de cette espèce, lesquels forment au moins la moitié de la langue écrite."—*Grammaire Chinoise*, art. 7. That the *hîng-chîng* characters are not near as numerous as they are represented to be in either of these statements, may, I conceive, be clearly inferred from the consideration, that if they constituted half or even a quarter of the Chinese writing, the reduction in the total number of ideagrams would be far greater than that which has actually taken place; and, besides, this writing would then cease to be legible, except through the intervention of the Chinese language, the very reverse of which is known to be the case, with respect to the mode of reading it which is practised by the greater number, by far, of the nations bordering on China.

M. Abel-Remusat, indeed, very consistently with his view of the number of the *hîng-chîng* compounds, held that the writing through which they were so much diffused, could be read only in Chinese, and finding it was thus read by one, or perhaps two, of the nations on the confines of China, he assumed this to be equally true of all who made use of it; and precipitately jumped to the conclusion, that the account of this matter given by all the older missionaries was wholly erroneous;—a position on which he laid so great a stress as to make it an essential preliminary to all further discussion on the subject. The following is an extract from a paper read by him before the *Institut Royal de France* in the year 1820, to which I have already, in my last volume, had occasion to refer. "En examinant ce que les peuples qui ont adopté l'écriture chinoise, ont exécuté dans des vues à peu près semblables, nous entrerons nécessairement dans des détails plus étendus. Ce sujet n'a pas encore été traité, et nous aurons même, dès les premiers pas, un préjugé, ou plutôt *une erreur grave*, à relever et à combattre. Les premiers missionnaires qui ont parlé de la langue chinoise ont dit, et l'on a répété d'après eux, dans toutes les relations et dans tous les traités de géographie généraux ou particuliers, que les caractères chinois, indifférens à toute pro-

nonciation, étoient entendus par les peuples voisins de la Chine, malgré la différence des idiomes, de sorte que les Tonquinois, les Cochinchinois, les Coréens, les Japonais, les lisoient en les prononçant à leur manière, et que toutes ces nations, qui ne sauroient s'entendre en parlant, ni avec les Chinois, ni entre elles, pouvoient toutefois correspondre par écrit et lire les mêmes livres, parce qu'elles attachoient la même signification aux caractères."—*Memoires de l'Institut, Académie des Inscriptions*, tom. viii. p. 44. Here it is very truly asserted that all the older missionaries, that is, all of them who wrote before the work of Du Halde was composed, have, from first to last, represented the writing of the Chinese as read by the surrounding nations without any knowledge of the Chinese language. A little further on our author proceeds with the following statement, which is true with respect to the present practice of the Japanese, but is scarcely so as to that of any of the other people enumerated. "Les livres de Confucius, et les autres ouvrages classiques dont l'intelligence est exigée de tous ceux qui occupent des emplois civils dans les pays soumis au régime des institutions chinoises; le calendrier impérial, que reçoivent tous les vassaux, et un très-petit nombre de livres du même genre, sont les seuls qui soient généralement lus et entendus, hors de la Chine, par tous ceux qui prétendent au titre de lettré; mais il est faux qu'ils les lisent dans leur langue. La prononciation qu'ils attribuent à chaque caractère est prise de celle que les Chinois eux-mêmes y attachent, et n'en diffère pas plus que celle de certaines provinces de l'empire ne diffère de la prononciation mandarinique. Lu par des lettrés de la Cochinchine ou du Japon, le chinois de ces livres est altéré et corrompu; mais c'est toujours du chinois. La phraséologie n'a pas besoin d'être changée, la grammaire reste la même; mais aussi cette langue est une langue savante, qui n'est connue que de ceux qui en ont fait une étude spéciale, qui n'est point entendue du commun des habitans, sauf un assez petit nombre de mots qui leur sont communs avec les Chinois —." *Memoires, &c.* tom. viii. pp. 45-6.

Now let us for a moment suppose this description strictly correct, even in its utmost extent, as respects every one of the nations to which it is applied; and what would be the consequence thence fairly deducible? Would it be, that the representations made upon the point by all the older missionaries are false? assuredly not. Those missionaries were, several of them, men of great assiduity and talents; they were in a more favourable position for acquiring information, through their influence with the Chinese government, than any can now expect to be placed in; and they had no conceivable motive for combining, all of them successively through a long series of years, to deceive the European public upon the subject in question. The only fair inference, therefore, from the discrepance between their common statement and that of M. Abel-Remusat would be, that the nature of the Chinese writing had been greatly changed since their time. So much for the reasoning of our author; but, as the case really stands, his facts are just as inadmissible as his deduction from them. It is perfectly ascertained, and can be shown from a variety of accounts entitled to credit, that the great majority of nations without the boundaries of China who correspond by means of Chinese writing, employ it at present exactly in the same manner as they are described to have done in the time of the older missionaries; so that the Japanese mode of reading it is not a sample of the general usage, but an exception to it, and serves to prove a change, not in the nature of the Chinese characters, but merely in the practice of the Japanese.

It is evident that, until the proportion of characters of the *hîng-chîng* class becomes considerable, some room will be left for different ways of reading Chinese; and that, till then, the mode of reading must depend, not only on the nature of the writing itself, but also on the habits of the reader. For instance, were this writing even wholly ideagraphic, still a person learning it, who was accustomed to alphabetic designations, would, from the facility he had of writing Chinese words, prefer getting those words by heart; because, by thus acquiring

names for the characters, he would be greatly assisted in committing them to memory. He would thus be led to read Chinese legends through the intervention of the Chinese language; and hence, I believe, it has arisen that they have always been so read by Europeans, since they first became acquainted with this writing. But it is a fact well attested, that the Japanese above a hundred or two hundred years ago, read Chinese in the same way as other nations residing near China, whereas they now use a method of reading it more in accordance with the European one; and this remarkable change in their practice indicates, as I conceive, an increased familiarity with syllabic signs, and a greater proportion of such signs in their writing, than was formerly used in it.

M. Abel-Remusat, imposed upon by the confident assertions of the Chinese, assumed that phonetic signs always existed in their writing; and illustrated the composition of the symbols of the *hîng-chîng* class in characters to which great age is attributed. To meet this indirect mode of establishing the antiquity of the demi-phonetic signs in question, I must here state, by anticipation, what shall be proved farther on, that the characters which are supposed so very old, are either the modern set altered for the purpose of giving them this very appearance, or of anterior date by only a few hundred years; and that the two sets, instead of being, as they are represented, of independent origin, are as intimately and obviously connected with each other, as are the Italic and Roman capitals. In reference to this fact, it is difficult to determine which is more astonishing, the impudence of the mandarins, or the credulity of some European savans.

The Professor has given an account of a very curious contrivance of the Tonquinese, by means of which they are enabled to read the Chinese writing, more clearly than any of the other neighbouring nations can, in their own language; and although it rests—as he asserts,^a and as far as I can find,—only on his

^a M. Abel-Remusat, at the close of his description, observes: “Je ne crois pas que ce système bizarre ait encore été exposé dans aucun ouvrage

authority, it is deserving of notice. The following are his words upon this subject:—"Mais la plus grande difficulté proviendrait d'une multitude de signes *entièrement nouveaux*, que les habitans ont formés d'après un système qui leur est particulier. On a vu que ces peuples ont en quelque sorte deux langues; l'une, qui est la langue chinoise prononcée à leur manière, est pour eux comme une langue savante; c'est l'idiome des lettrés; l'autre, qui est leur langue maternelle, offre avec la première de nombreux points de contact, mais présente aussi des différences considérables. Ils ont voulu combiner l'une avec l'autre dans l'écriture; c'est ce qu'un exemple rendra sensible. Un *loup* se nomme en chinois *lang*, et le caractère qui désigne cet animal est formé du radical des animaux carnassiers, joint au signe de la prononciation *liang*; mais, en tonquinois, un loup s'appelle *soï*; on a donc pris le caractère *lang* des Chinois; mais on y a joint un groupe de traits qui, en tonquinois, représentoit le son *soï*. Ainsi le nouveau caractère s'est trouvé composé de deux parties, l'une chinoise, et l'autre annamitique. La réunion de ces deux parties constitue un groupe très-compiqué dont aucun Chinois ne sauroit deviner la composition. Le nombre des caractères formés ainsi est très considérable; on peut dire même qu'il est indéfini, et qu'il doit s'accroître à chaque occasion nouvelle où l'on veut exprimer un son de la langue d'Annam."—*Memoires de l'Institut*, tom. viii. pp. 48-9.

Upon this description I will venture to make a few remarks. It is evident that, as long as the Chinese writing was purely ideographic, the Chinese and Tonquinese could understand it equally well, and read it, the individuals of each nation in their own language, without being under the necessity of having any knowledge of the other tongue; but the introduction into it of

imprimé." The circumstance here mentioned by him increases the novelty of his account, but not the credit which may be due to it; yet still I am inclined to believe it in the main correct, because the characters therein described, are such as would naturally grow out of the innovation which has taken place in the Chinese system.

phonetic ingredients by the former people, must have impaired the power of the latter to make their old use of it. This inconvenience the Tonquinese appear to have removed, by adding to the *hîng-chîng* characters a second phonetic element accommodated to their own language. The persons, indeed, who made the addition, must have been acquainted with both languages; for otherwise they could not be secure, that they restricted the general meaning denoted by the ideagraphic part of a compound sign, to the same special meaning in the one dialect as it was in the other. But, with this exception, it is plain that the whole body of Tonquinese readers could understand the Chinese writing, thus modified, just as they formerly used it, in its previous state, without any knowledge of the Chinese language; and, as appears to me, the same advantage is equally enjoyed by both parties. M. Abel-Remusat, indeed, assumed that the Tonquinese retain in their compound characters the Chinese phonetic elements, merely for the purpose of reading those characters in two different ways, in which he further took it for granted that they are familiar with both languages; but surely a much stronger, as well as more rational motive for rendering their demi-phonetic signs so very complicated, would be, to enable them to continue to correspond as before with their powerful neighbours. The practicability of effecting this object seems obvious; for if a Tonquinese, knowing only his own language, can ascertain the precise meaning of a compound character, notwithstanding that it contains one phonetic group of lines with the use of which he is unacquainted, a Chinese surely may equally do so, although he should be, in like manner, ignorant of its other phonetic element. Or, if the former individual be supposed able to speak Chinese, he must, in reading the compound in question in that language, neglect the part of it adapted to the Anamitic tongue; and, consequently, the latter, in making the same use of the character, must put out of his consideration the same part; but what he has to overlook in the process, it is, as I conceive, unnecessary that he should understand. But however this may be, our author here, at all events,

affords an instance of the Tonquinese reading the Chinese writing—no farther altered than by the addition of certain ingredients to a small portion of its characters—in the very way in which he just before expressly denied it was read by this people, or by any of the other nations in the neighbourhood of China; and thus assists us himself to overturn his main principle, and refute the charge of a grave error brought by him against the older missionaries.

In the second place, the circumstance of the species of *hîng-chîng* characters employed by the Tonquinese being entirely new, and continually on the increase, lends the support of analogy to the inference I have drawn with respect to the syllabic writing of the Japanese. That writing, indeed, has already arrived at its maximum degree of extension, as the texts composed of it are now made to correspond to every part of the ideographic lines they accompany; and, consequently, it must in all probability have come into use much earlier than the triple compounds in question; but still is not likely to be near as old as is generally supposed, and probably increased from a small beginning gradually till it reached its present state.

In the third place, the novelty of the triple compounds of the Tonquinese, makes very decidedly for that of the double compounds of the Chinese; for the one set of characters has obviously grown out of the other, with probably a very short interval between their respective commencements; since the correspondence of the two nations has been carried on without interruption, as far back as the accounts of their intercourse can be traced. If, therefore, the *hîng-chîng* signs had been old, their offspring could not be young; or, at least, not so very young as Abel-Remusat has alleged. But their novelty may be also proved from other considerations. They must, for instance, occupy but an inconsiderable portion of the writing which can still be read without any knowledge of the language to which they are confined; and yet they must, within the last hundred years, have very sensibly increased in number, in a system in which the total amount of characters has, during the same

interval, very sensibly diminished. These circumstances viewed separately, as well as in combination, tell strongly against those characters being of any great age; for, if they were old, they would, from their obvious tendency to increase, have become before now very numerous; and also would, from the same tendency, have long since attained their maximum limit, so that no increase in their numbers could for a length of time past have been perceptible. In fact, there is strong reason for concluding, that the *hîng-chîng* compounds are the kind of phonetic signs which have latest come into use among the Chinese.

Before I proceed farther in this discussion, it is right that I should adduce evidence in support of my assertion, that most of the nations who make use of the Chinese writing, do still continue to read it, in the same way as they all did in the time of the older missionaries, each of them in their own language; although it now contains, I admit, some portion of elements of a nature calculated to confine it to the Chinese tongue. Upon the point in question Dr. Morrison gives us the following information:—"The Chinese language is now read by a population of different nations, amounting to a large proportion of the human race, and over a very extensive geographical space from the borders of Russia on the north, throughout Chinese Tartary on the west, and in the east as far as Kamschatka; and downwards through Corea and Japan, in the Loo Choo Islands, Cochin China, and the islands of that Archipelago on most of which are Chinese settlers, till you come down to the equinoctial line at Penang, Malacca, Singapore, and even beyond it on Java. Throughout all these regions, however dialects may differ, and *oral* languages be confounded, the Chinese written language is understood by all. The voyager and the merchant, the traveller and the Christian missionary, if he can *write* Chinese, may make himself understood throughout the whole of eastern Asia."—*Chinese Miscellany*, p. 1. To the same effect Sir George Staunton writes thus:—"Not above half a dozen of the present characters consist each of a single line; but most of them consist of many; and a few of so many as seventy different strokes. The form of those characters has

not been so flux as the sound of the words, as appears in the instance of almost all the countries bordering on the Chinese Sea, or Eastern Asia, where the Chinese written, but not the oral language, is understood;—.”^a *Account of Lord Macartney's Embassy to China*, vol. ii. p. 573.

Sufficient authorities have now, I conceive, been produced to establish the fact, that many nations still read the Chinese writing without any knowledge of the Chinese language. But as this practice is so different from the mode of reading to which we are accustomed, a more particular account of it may perhaps be found interesting; I shall, therefore, venture to subjoin some extracts from two works, of small size, but well worth reading, which were published not long since in London, and were written, one of them by a German Protestant employed in the East by the London Missionary Society, and the other by a British naval officer in the service of the East India Company. The main object of the former author is to show the practicability of converting to Christianity a large portion of the Chinese, through the instrumentality of the Scriptures, printed in their own peculiar kind of writing; and that of the latter, to prove that, comparatively speaking, a very small British force would be quite sufficient to tame the arrogance of the Chinese, and put a stop to their insolent aggressions upon the commercial rights of English traders. They both make out very strong

^a Here I must observe, that I quote the above passage from Sir George Staunton's narrative, only for the fact therein attested by him, and not for the theory by which he endeavoured to account for it;—a theory which only shows that he was just as much imposed upon as other Europeans have been, by the impudent pretensions of the Chinese. According to the view of the matter which he appears to have taken upon trust from them, the Chinese characters, though so numerous and so complicated in their structure, have never undergone any considerable change,—even during the time of their successive transcriptions, before the art of printing was invented;—so that the age of them, in nearly their present number and shapes, can be traced back to a period when, it seems, the Chinese and all the surrounding nations spoke exactly the same language! In justice to our author I should add, that the discussion of philological subjects constitutes but a very subordinate part of his work.

cases in support of their respective views ; but with these I have at present no concern, and shall confine myself to the passages in which they incidentally describe their mode of holding communication with the Coreans, a people wholly ignorant of the Chinese language.^a

The publication of the missionary,—with which I shall commence,—is entitled, *A Journal of three Voyages made along the Coast of China in the Years 1831, 1832, 1833, by CHARLES GUTZLAFF*. But, before I come to the passages of this little work to which I would here wish principally to draw attention, I hope I shall be excused for premising one in which Gutzlaff has given some account of Dr. Morrison, and in which he bears very strong and just testimony to the great value of the editorial labours of that author. It is as follows:—“As soon as the God of all grace had moved the minds of his people in Great Britain to send abroad the heralds of salvation, China was also remembered. But it was so late as 1807, when the London Missionary Society sent the first messenger of peace to this benighted country. They found in Dr. Morrison a man eminently fitted for the great work. He had an ardent desire to serve his Saviour, and perseverance to continue the labours which his zeal for the salvation of souls had projected. Under the guidance and help of his Lord, who graciously protected him from numerous enemies, he studied, without being discouraged, the Chinese language, which offers great difficulties to the student ; and has translated the Holy Scriptures, a work which the Roman Catholic missionaries, during their labours for more than 200 years in China, had never executed. His appointment of translator to the British factory in China, secured to him a place not so much exposed to the malice of his enemies. He completed also a Dictionary, under the patronage of the East India

^a M. Klaproth, in a publication of his respecting Corea, which has been referred to in the fifth chapter of this Essay, gives a Korean vocabulary, in which he has marked a small proportion of the words as of Chinese origin. But experience proves that several words may be common to two languages, and yet not enable the speakers of those languages to understand each other.

Company, the directors of which defrayed the expenses of publication. This will always remain a standard work, and has already been one of the most effectual means of paving the way for others to acquire the language.”—*Journal of three Voyages, &c.* p. 345.

I shall, upon this subject, here merely add,—in order to show that the learning Chinese is not quite so easy an undertaking as it is the fashion of many at the present day to represent it,—that, although Dr. Morrison was endowed with very peculiar talents for the purpose, and had made some progress in the Chinese writing and language before his departure from England, yet was he engaged in this study under the instruction of native teachers,—the greater part of the time with a degree of diligence and perseverance which not only evinced great zeal, but also required extraordinary strength of constitution,—for three years, before he commenced the work of printing any portion of the Scriptures in the Chinese character; and three years more elapsed before he had completed the New Testament in that character.

The following extracts are those in which Gutzlaff chiefly refers to his intercourse with the Coreans. He had acquired the power of speaking Chinese fluently, by a long residence at Siam, and was, in the present instance, accompanied by others, who also were familiar with the language as well as the writing of China. “July 17 we came to anchor at *Chwangshan*, an island north of Basil’s Bays. The silence of the desert seemed to reign every where. We ventured towards the shore; and the first thing we met, was a fishing boat, miserably constructed, with two natives in it clothed in rags. Though we could not communicate with them orally, yet we could use the Chinese character in writing. We gave the old man a few books, and lion buttons, which highly delighted him. As soon as we had landed on a small island, several natives came down from a hill, wearing conical caps of horse hair, with jackets and trowsers similar to the Chinese, but wider, and without buttons. Nothing could exceed the gravity of their look and demeanour.

An elderly man, who held a staff, bade us sit down by repeating several times 'tshoa.' After complying with his request, he made a long harangue, of which we understood not a syllable, but in which he seemed very earnest. From his unequivocal gestures, and from a young man whom we had the happiness to find, who understood a few Chinese words, we afterwards learned that he was pointing out to us the regulations of his country, and the duties of strangers on their arrival."—*Journal of three Voyages, &c.* p. 266.

"July 18 We were anxious to walk up to the village, but were stopped near a miserable hovel, where several natives, in a respectable dress, met us. We were desirous to barter for some cattle, which were abundant here, and were inquisitive to know the residence of a great mandarin, to whom we might hand a petition addressed to his majesty. On the plea of bearing a letter to the monarch, we wished to be treated with civility. They wrote down, 'Please to communicate to us the contents.' Answer, 'How dare we communicate the affairs of so great a king to his subjects?' They replied, 'Report it to the mandarins, and they will report it to the king.' We then desired them to call a mandarin of the first rank, to whom we should communicate our intentions. They pointed out to us the residence of such an officer, who lived only a few miles to the north; and bade us get immediately under way, to free them from such troublesome company, and to gain our object."—p. 268.

"July 23 [on another part of the coast] during all the time [of a repast given by the natives], we made many inquiries about the country, the residence of the mandarins, &c.; but had the mortification to find that, though we amply satisfied their curiosity, they gave us no satisfactory answer to the most trivial questions. All this conversation was carried on by writing the Chinese character, which, though differently pronounced by the Coreans, conveys to them the same meaning as to the Chinese."—p. 271.

The second work I refer to, which gives an account of the

same occurrences at Corea, and was published in 1833, is entitled, *Report of Proceedings in a Voyage to the northern Ports of China in the Ship Lord Amherst, extracted from Papers printed by order of the House of Commons, relating to the Trade with China*. This report Mr. Lindsay, the supercargo of the East-Indiaman in which the voyage was made, and in which Gutzlaff also sailed, drew up for the information of the East India Company, from his own journal of the voyage. Whether it was that the two writers thought it wrong to compare notes, or that each, priding himself on his knowledge of Chinese, did not choose to consult the other, their accounts bear evident marks of being independent testimonies. These accounts completely verify each other in their general outline; while, at the same time, there are some particulars mentioned in each which are omitted in the other; as, indeed, might be expected from their brevity and the different views with which they were written. The latter volume, therefore, sometimes supplies what is defective in the information conveyed by the former; and I select from it, in the first instance, a passage which will serve to correct an erroneous impression that might otherwise be left on the reader's mind, in consequence of the conciseness of Gutzlaff's narrative. From his rapid sketch of the communication he held, by means of Chinese characters, with the fisherman in rags, it might be imagined that those characters were very generally and completely understood in Corea. Whereas, in point of fact, the poor Corean in question was able to write no more than the name of the adjoining place;^a and not one of the

^a The characters in which the fisherman wrote this name, appear to have been read by one of the voyagers *Chwang-shan*, and by the other *Chang-sham*, or *Pung-shang*. This discrepance will serve to give some idea of the great imperfection of the Chinese method of writing names, even with the use of modern characters; but it obviously would be far greater, if the symbols employed were really ancient. It may perhaps occur to the reader, that the most natural way for the fisherman to have proceeded, as soon as he understood the written question which was put to him, would have been to speak out the name which was inquired for. But he would thus have given only the Corean

many persons they met just afterwards on the shore, could read Chinese. Nor does it appear that, during the whole time of their stay, they found more than two who were well acquainted with the system,—the secretaries to two chiefs of rank, who were, on account of their skill in Chinese writing, appointed to act as interpreters between the Korean authorities and the strangers. The passage in question is as follows:—"At five Mr. Gutzlaff and myself left the ship in the gig, anxious to make our first acquaintance with the Koreans, of whose manners former navigators have given so very unfavourable an impression. In our way on shore we boarded a small fishing-boat; the people in it at first seemed much alarmed, but were soon reassured, on my asking them in writing what the name of the place was; one wrote down *Chang-sham, Pung-shang*; but he could not give us any more information, understanding very few Chinese characters. We gave him a book and a few lion buttons, which he gladly received, and voluntarily offered us some fish in return. We then landed on a point, where were some fishermen's huts and several fishermen. They objected strongly to our approaching their cottages, and an old man addressed us a long speech, which was quite unintelligible to us. The evening having now closed in, we returned on board, making signs that we meant to return on the following morning, and inviting them to come off to the ship. None of the party could read Chinese; we were therefore incapable to communicate with them."—*Report of Proceedings, &c.* p. 215.

Upon the main point, however, of the Chinese characters being read by the Koreans in their own language, and not through the medium of a foreign one, Lindsay's narrative entirely agrees with that of Gutzlaff; as the following extract will show still more distinctly than the preceding one. "At eight in the evening we were again visited by the two secre-

verbal denomination of the place, which, as less generally known, would be less useful to our voyagers than the Chinese one; and this latter he was unable to communicate to them, except through the medium of the written name.

taries with a string of questions, as to the ship's cargo, the names of all the officers and men, length and breadth of the ship, heights of the masts, &c., together with numerous inquiries about England; why it was called *Ta-ying* (Great Britain); was there a *Seaon-ying* (Small Britain). The conference lasted till near midnight, but was entirely kept up on paper. The inconvenience and tediousness of this was remarked by *Yang-yih* [one of the secretaries], who was a highly intelligent and lively person; before going he wrote,—‘Except by writing, my words are unintelligible to you, and yours to me; truly this is vexatious.’ ”^a—p. 233.

It is unnecessary to multiply extracts any farther, for the purpose of showing that the writing of the Chinese can be understood without any knowledge of their language. Upon the nature of the evidence which has been just adduced, I shall make but one observation. Besides that the accounts given by the two voyagers exhibit the strongest internal marks of truth, the facts they mention in the above quotations, cannot be suspected of having received even an unintentional colouring from prejudice; as they wrote with minds wholly unbiassed in reference to the subject on which those facts so strikingly bear, and most probably without considering their bearing on it, one of

^a The following passages from the same volume do not bear upon the point in question, but still are worth inserting in a note, for the allusions they contain to the literature of the Coreans, and the syllabic writing peculiar to them, which they make use of in addition to the Chinese characters. “In reply to some questions from us, they [the two secretaries] stated that the books they read and studied, were mostly Chinese, viz. the four books, *Woo-Ring* [in Chinese called *Se-Shu*], &c.; but that they had also a literature of their own.”—p. 233. “One day, the 27th, after a great deal of persuasion, we succeeded in inducing *Yang-yih* to write out a copy of the Corean alphabet; and Mr. Gutzlaff having written the Lord's Prayer in Chinese character, he both gave the sound, and wrote it out in Corean character; but after having done so, he expressed the greatest alarm, repeatedly passing his hand across his throat, and intimating that, if the chiefs knew it, he would lose his head. . . . During these first days, I also succeeded in obtaining the Corean names for various Chinese words.”—p. 239.

them having directed his attention almost exclusively to religious, and the other to commercial views. Both their narratives, when combined with the more general descriptions previously quoted, serve completely to acquit the earlier missionaries of the charge of "a grave error" brought against them by M. Abel-Remusat, and to justify their statements, as to the manner in which Chinese characters were read in their time, by proving that they are read in the same manner at the present day. The Professor, however, derided the very idea of any characters (except, indeed, numeric ones) being understood in common by nations not speaking a common language, or, at least, languages of a common grammatical construction. "Cette idée," he remarks, "ramenoit naturellement à celle de l'écriture universelle, et se fortifioit par l'exemple des chiffres arabes, qui, comme on l'a déjà dit, s'y rapporte assez bien. Ainsi les essais de de Murr n'eussent pas été tout-à-fait chimériques, puisqu'on n'auroit eu, pour remplir l'objet qu'il se proposoit, qu'à suivre une méthode déjà en vigueur chez plusieurs peuples, en appliquant aux usages généraux ce qui a été fait pour l'usage de l'arithmétique. Sans nous perdre en de vaines spéculations, le seul fait, tel qu'il a été avancé, seroit pour nous un assez grand sujet d'étonnement. En effet, si l'on veut y prendre garde, il faudroit que les idiomes des peuples voisins de la Chine eussent une grande analogie avec celui des Chinois, pour que les premiers eussent adopté, sans aucun changement, les caractères des derniers, et qu'ils eussent été en état de lire dans leur langue des livres qui auroient été écrits dans une langue différente; il faudroit que la construction fût exactement semblable, l'ordre des mots le même, les inversions correspondantes, les métaphores identiques, les particules et les signes des rapports toujours employés dans les mêmes cas et mis à la même place; tant d'analogies, qui supposeroient un accord complet dans le génie de tous ces langages, seroit un phénomène que la différence matérielle des mots rendroit encore plus difficile à expliquer."—*Memoires de l'Inst.* tom. viii. pp. 44-5.

In the above passage, our author takes for granted a point

which is involved in the question at issue. Undoubtedly *if* ideagrams be necessarily connected with grammatical forms and constructions of words, they cannot supply expressions of thought which are independent of language; but the assumption here made by him, is entirely without foundation. It is not, however, requisite to dwell upon the fallacy of his reasoning on the subject, since the mode of reading Chinese documents which he wished to make out impossible, is proved on the clearest evidence to be really and actually in use; and that too not only in reference to the more ancient books called *classic*, but also with respect to those which have been very recently written. De Murr's notion, therefore, of a system of writing which might be understood in common by nations of different languages, is by no means as chimerical as the Professor wished to represent it; but, I must add, the completion of such a system, though practicable, would be useless; or, at least, the resulting advantage would not be sufficient to compensate for the great labour to be undergone by the framer, and afterwards by the learners of the system. For this writing, as being necessarily in the main ideagraphic, might answer, indeed, the purposes of present communication, where great accuracy of expression was not requisite; but it would totally fail in the important requisite of affording a permanent record of events; and besides, it would continue intelligible to different nations, only as long as the intercourse between them lasted. For, in the course of time, the characters of a very complicated and extensive system, such as one of the sort under consideration must be, would necessarily undergo alterations of meaning as well as of shape, and new characters with new meanings would be introduced; but it is evident that neither class of changes could be understood, except by parties who communicated, and were agreed thereon. The circumstance, therefore, of the Chinese writing being read, as it is by nations ignorant of the Chinese language, is by no means attributable to the cause which the mandarins assign for it, the durability of their characters—a durability which, it can be clearly shown, they have not in either meaning or shape—;

but it is solely occasioned, by the intercourse which the nations in question are under the necessity of keeping up with the Celestial Empire. If that intercourse were discontinued but for a single century, those nations would cease to have a system of writing, understood by them and the Chinese in common, by means of which they could communicate with each other; and, before printing and phonetic signs were introduced, a still shorter interval would have been sufficient to produce the same effect.

To return to the subject from which I digressed;—the characters of the *hîng-chîng* class have some analogy to those alluded to in the first Part of my work; respecting which I therein expressed an expectation, that some such signs would soon find their way into the graphic system of China. The phonetic portion of each of those characters is not, indeed, in accordance with my conjecture, combined with written marks for the accent, the tone of voice, and the gesticulation, by which the Chinese endeavours to limit the monosyllable expressed to some one meaning (which marks would teach, or remind a reader, how he was to pronounce the articulate sound for such meaning); but the combination actually employed conducts him more directly, by means of its ideagraphic part, to a determinate signification; and he must then fix upon the proper pronunciation, as well as he can, through his knowledge of the language.

If the Chinese savans, in selecting the syllabic ingredients of the *hîng-chîng* characters, confined themselves always to the same set of signs, so as to avoid the use of homophones or diaphones to any considerable extent, they would thereby, it is evident, arrive at once at a syllabary; which, though certainly a very clumsy system, and vastly inferior to European alphabets, would yet supply the means of an immense improvement upon their present method of writing. But simple as the required step seems to be, and great as have been for some time past their aids and inducements to taking it, they had not, up to a very recent date, succeeded in effecting any such progress. Of

this remarkable fact, which bears so powerfully against the visionary hypothesis of the independent invention of alphabets, the following attestation is given even by M. Abel-Remusat :—
 “ Si le nombre des groupes syllabiques qu’on employoit ainsi avoit été déterminé, et si l’on avoit toujours eu soin d’exprimer la même syllabe par le même signe, rien n’eût été plus hereusement imaginé que ce procédé, qui auroit réuni et en quelque sorte concilié les avantages opposés de l’écriture figurative et de l’écriture alphabétique ;^a mais il s’est mêlé en cela, comme en toutes choses, du caprice et de l’inconséquence. Le choix des signes syllabiques a souvent été arbitraire et mal dirigé. Le même groupe a servi à exprimer des sons divers, tandis qu’on faisoit varier sans nécessité les groupes qui devoient représenter la même syllabe. Il est résulté de là beaucoup de confusion et d’irrégularité ;—” *Memoires de l’Institut*, tom. viii. p. 41.

Here is presented to us, from the testimony of an extravagant admirer of Chinese writing, a tolerably striking picture of the *great confusion and irregularity* which pervade the phonetic portion of that very writing ; and the reader can easily decide, whether he should attach more weight to general praises of a system, or to particular admissions of its imperfection which come out incidentally in detail. It may, still further, be observed upon this evidence, that in it M. Abel-Remusat, though a zealous advocate for the independent invention of alphabets, charges, not upon Chinese incapacity alone, but upon the general constitution of the human mind, the inability to attend of itself

^a One must be struck with the extraordinary prejudice of the Chinese Professor, evinced by his praises of so miserably imperfect and unwieldy an alphabet ; which, according to his own account of the number of monosyllables in the language, distinguished by their different accents (*grammaire chinoise*, art. 56), would include 1203 syllabic letters.

In the above extract the author shows that he was perfectly aware of the essential principle of alphabetic construction ; although he found it convenient to suppress that principle upon occasions when, in fairness, it should have been brought under consideration ; as, for instance, in his efforts to make out an independent origin and superior nature for the Korean alphabet ;—efforts which have already been noticed, in the fifth and sixth chapters of this Essay.

to a principle, without the observance of which it would be absolutely impossible to construct any alphabetic system whatever. But the quotation is principally referred to in proof of the fact, that, as late as a period shortly preceding the year 1820, when the Memoir from which it is extracted was read before the *Institut*, the Chinese, after descending from a foreign system of consonants and vowels to phonetic writing of the very lowest grade, had as yet failed to reascend to an alphabet of their own formation, even of the most clumsy kind. To weaken the force with which this fact tells against the power of man to invent an alphabet, it may perhaps be urged, that the *hîng-chîng* characters are only of recent origin, and that their novelty sufficiently accounts for the circumstance of the mandarins not having yet discovered the most advantageous use to which they are capable of being applied. But the same defence cannot be made with respect to the simpler syllabic signs—those uncompounded with any marks to restrict them to determinate significations—which were long before introduced into Chinese writing, and in the management of which, notwithstanding, the savans in question have equally bungled. A definite system formed of these signs would, indeed, be of little use in the general text of Chinese writing; but it would supply the important advantage, which has hitherto been wholly wanted in this writing,—an effective contrivance for the permanent preservation of names. Such a system, it is possible, may by this time have been constructed in China; and if not yet, the probability is that it soon will. In the Memoir from which the above extract has been given, is related an order of the Chinese government directly leading to the formation of a syllabary of the rude kind in question, to be applied, indeed, only to a particular purpose—the designation of Tartar names—; but when the benefit of it is found in that way, it may naturally be expected to come gradually into more general use, and eventually to lead to the construction of a syllabary of *hîng-chîng* signs. As the government, however, has had for such a length of time some knowledge of alphabetic writing (though their gross cor-

ruption of the particular system of this description employed by them, shows how very imperfect that knowledge must be); whatever improvement is now introduced into the Chinese phonetic practice, must surely be laid to the account, not of independent invention, but of imitative observation. The following is the passage to which I have alluded. “Enfin l’un des empereurs de la dynastie régnante a publié un décret pour ordonner qu’à l’avenir les noms des peuples et des lieux dans la Mongolie et les autres provinces de l’empire, hors de la grande muraille, s’écrivissent en chinois d’une manière uniforme; et, dans cette vue, il a fait choix d’un certain nombre de caractères qui peuvent exprimer toutes les nuances de la prononciation tartare. Il est à regretter que ce syllabaire, car c’en est véritablement un, n’ait pas été adopté plus tôt; les noms étrangers se seroient mieux conservés, et l’on auroit moins de peine à les reconnoître dans l’histoire et dans les traités de géographie ancienne.”—*Ibidem*, pp. 42–3.

Here again at the close of this extract an admission respecting Chinese writing slips out, which I beg the reader will combine with the following observation of the same author, taken from his treatise on the Tartar languages and alphabets. “On ne doit pas toujours ajouter une foi implicite aux assertions des auteurs chinois, même de ceux qui, comme *Ma-touan-lin*, méritent d’être nommés parmi les plus instruits; quand ils avancent que tel ou tel peuple ignore entièrement l’usage de caractères, cela doit quelquefois s’entendre seulement des caractères chinois, qui sont si répandus chez les nations voisines, que les lettrés ont quelque droit de s’étonner, quand ils trouvent un peuple auquel ces caractères sont restés inconnus. Souvent aussi les préjugés nationaux et le mépris pour les étrangers, qui est commun à tous les Chinois, les ont éloignés d’un examen approfondi, et ont causé leur erreur.”—*Recherches sur les langues Tartares*, p. 67. The want of veracity on the part of Chinese authors—even those in the highest repute—is here only gently intimated, and the imputation is limited to their accounts of foreign concerns. But if they deceive us on one

subject, how can we depend upon them on any other? To confine myself, however, to the admitted case of delinquency;—could the literature of this people afford us information of any material value or interest, it would be in the department of their history, and particularly its foreign branch; but in this latter, it transpires, the names of ancient persons and places cannot be deciphered, except with great difficulty, and consequently with great uncertainty; and even supposing them recovered, and the meaning of old records thus arrived at, still the truth of those records could not be relied on.

But the want under which the Chinese labour, of any means of preserving ancient names, even those that are national, is more forcibly illustrated by a fact, the verification of which I must defer till I come to the immediate consideration of their historic records, but to which I cannot refrain from here alluding by anticipation. It is actually the case that the Chinese authorities have always, as far back as accounts can be traced, been in the practice of changing, from time to time, the names of places in China; and this practice, it is admitted on all sides, has been productive of the greatest perplexity and confusion in the history of the empire. That the mandarins should persevere in this mode of proceeding, after finding from experience the mischief with which it is attended, must, at first view, appear very surprising; but their conduct can in one way be accounted for; and in no other, I will venture to say, can a satisfactory explanation of it be given. The Chinese characters express Chinese words, by immediately denoting the subjects which are called by those words; and they, in this way, ideographically signify national proper names, whether of persons or places, just in the same manner as they do any other words of the language. If the Chinese, for the representation of their words, had succeeded in confining themselves uniformly to one character for each, whatever might be the meaning of that word, the 1203 symbols thus selected by them, would be converted into phonetic signs; which, without the addition of some restrictive marks, would, indeed, be too vague for the expression

of their language, but would afford a mode of recording proper names, the durability of which would be quite independent of the ideagraphic uses made of the same characters. In the observance of this precaution, however, they have, as yet, totally failed; and the consequence is, that their signs of Chinese proper names are still ideagraphic, and continue to suggest those names to the mind, only as long as they continue ideagraphically to express the same words, taken in other meanings that are in more common and familiar use. The perishable nature of the ties which connect these very arbitrary and complicated symbols with their meanings, and still more feebly with the words expressive of those meanings, shall be exposed in the following chapters; but, when the links in question are all broken, the characters must cease to be legible, and the proper names which they formerly denoted, are irrecoverably lost. This fatal defect of their writing the mandarins are most anxious to conceal; because the possibility of their having any knowledge of their ancient history,—a history which they impudently pretend to trace with certainty as far back as 4000 years,—depends entirely on the permanent legibility of their characters, particularly those employed in the expression of proper names. Hence it is that they impose upon their youths, the heavy task of committing to memory the graphic signs of the names of all the families of any consequence in China. But to get by heart, in like manner, the written names of all the places in the Celestial Empire, would be too much for memories already overladen in other ways. What then is the resource of the mandarins? They cannot wait till the symbol for a particular town, for instance, and thereby the graphic mark of its name, loses all the other meanings by which it could recall to memory that name; as it would thus become illegible to, by far, the greater portion of Chinese readers,—to all of them, in fact, except those who had some connexion with the town, and were in the constant habit of writing this its ancient designation. Neither could they, before the old symbol became quite obsolete, attempt to substitute for it a new one in familiar use; for thus the grand

defect of their writing would be equally divulged in the most public manner. But, instead of either of these measures, they adopt one which, as appears to me, does not at all consist in a stupid adherence, without any rational motive, to a practice that had been found to be attended with serious inconvenience, but on the contrary evinces a considerable degree of cunning. Under the pretence of doing honour to some great man, they alter the spoken denomination of the town; and this change of name is quite naturally accompanied by a change of symbol, without any imputation on the credit of their writing.

That, in accordance with the view of the subject which has been just given, the Chinese characters do, in the course of time, lose their significations, is occasionally admitted by even the most ardent advocates for the imperishable legibility of those very characters. Thus M. Abel-Remusat zealously supported the assertion of the mandarins, that their writing had undergone no material change for the last 2000 years, in consequence of which he agreed with them in assigning that length of time to the *modern* Chinese history; and yet, as if forgetting all this, or unconscious that he was overturning his favourite position, he makes the following statement in the memoir to which I have already so often referred. “ — les noms propres d’hommes et de lieux, les mots étrangers qui se sont introduits dans la langue, les particules et beaucoup de pollysyllabes, se sont écrits avec des signes syllabiques dont le sens, s’ils en ont eu un autrefois, est depuis long-temps mis de côté, ou tout-à-fait perdu de vue.”—*Memoires de l’Inst.* tom. viii. p. 42. Here it is expressly admitted, that a Chinese character may lose all its significations except that of a proper name: but surely, when it ceases to denote a meaning in common use (whereby it served to suggest the word which in the Chinese language is associated with that meaning), it must also cease to recall to the mind an articulate sound, unless it be one of the comparatively small number which are committed to memory, in connexion with the names of the principal families in China.

Besides the written names above described, the Chinese

employ others which also lead to the spoken ones, through ideographic significations, and are at the same time characteristic representations of the persons denoted (such as I have, in the first Part of this work, shown to have come into use among the Egyptians, during the dynasty of the Ptolemies). Sometimes they unite symbols of both these kinds in the designation of the same appellation. Thus the name of Confucius is written in three characters, * * *, of which the first, read by the word *kung*, is of the former class, and denotes his family denomination; while the second, read *foo*, and the third, *tsze*, belong to the latter. In Dr. Morrison's Dictionary there are, connected with the articulate sound *kung*, thirty-five different characters, of which the one here under consideration has the following meanings. "An ancient designation of excellence,—a spacious vacuum,—an orifice,—an aperture,—the hole of a musical instrument,—the passages of an animal body,—the name of a bird [the peacock],—a surname." Independently of the permanency which religious impressions can give to a sign, this character is associated with the word *kung* through so many meanings in common use, that it is not likely soon to fail of suggesting to a Chinese reader the first part of the Philosopher's name. The second and third characters of this name have also the advantage of being employed with significations of familiar and frequent occurrence. The symbol which is read *tsze*, primarily denotes "a son;" but as the Chinese philosophers, from an affectation of modesty, were in the habit of giving themselves this title, it hence came to signify "a sage." That which is read *foo*, also denotes "a sage;" and the double expression of this quality is probably intended to give intensity to the designation of the philosophic character; as much as to say, "Kung, the very great sage." The name, however, is sometimes written with only one of the above characteristic epithets, *Kung-tsze*. In the French orthography, the Chinese pronunciation of this compound denomination is represented by *Khoùng-fou-tseù*, or *Khoùng-tseù*.

There is in use among the Chinese a third mode of idea-

graphically recording proper names, in which the symbols employed have no direct reference to those names, but merely represent the personal characters of the individuals to whom they belonged; and, consequently, can suggest them only in an indirect way, and to a reader in whose mind they are already associated with the collections of attributes that are immediately expressed. Such designations, it is evident, are still less durable than either of the former kinds; as not only the symbols of which they consist, may cease to signify the qualities composing the personal characters in question, but also the associations between those characters and the names they are intended to recall, are of a very perishable nature. As these characteristic portraits bear a close analogy to the old ideographic names which the Egyptians adopted next after pictorial ones (and beyond which they certainly never advanced, till after they had learned the use of phonetic signs from observation of Greek writing), I shall take the present opportunity of comparing with each other the two sorts of designations; and, for that purpose, will very briefly revert to what has been already stated on one branch of the subject in the first Part of this work.

The first way in which the Egyptians endeavoured to record names, was by hieroglyphic figures, drawn as pictures of the individuals who bore those names; the second was by emblems of the qualities by which the personal characters of those individuals were distinguished, a single emblem being appropriated to each character; and the third was by collections of such emblems, the number employed in those collections gradually increasing in the course of time, according as the graphic art improved. Thus the name of the god "Osiris" was at first hieroglyphically written by his portrait, a human figure with the head of a hawk; the peculiarity which limited this figure originally to a single individual, being intended to express the sharpness of sight which he was supposed to possess in an eminent degree. He was next denoted, and his name suggested by the hawk alone, the emblem of his extraordinary powers of vision. But, in the progress of time, these representations were extended to a whole

class of deities ; and then he was characteristically described by the hieroglyphic combination of “an eye and a throne,” or “an eye and a sceptre,” which immediately denoted his penetration and sovereign power, and thus ultimately suggested the name “Osiris.” The connexion, indeed, between the personal character attributed to him and his spoken denomination, was quite arbitrary ; yet religion made it so lasting in the minds of the people, that the word probably underwent but little change, before the time when the introduction of Greek writing put a stop to all further alteration, and served to perpetuate it in its present form. But, with the exception of this and a very few other ideagraphic names, all those which were written long before the commencement of the intercourse between the Egyptians and Greeks, have been irrecoverably lost. Thus the hieroglyphic combination of three emblems immediately expressive of “splendour, divinity, and power,” which (by the testimony of Manetho, respecting the colossal statue at Thebes on which it has been found) is known to have designated an ancient Egyptian sovereign now generally called Memnon, is proved by the increased number of its ingredient symbols, to be of later date than that which has been just considered ; and yet scarcely a fragment of the spoken name with which it was formerly connected, has been preserved. Among the different ways in which this name is written by Greek authors, are included, *Memnon*, *Amenophis*, *Ammenoph*, *Amenophthis*, *Ammenepthes*, *Phamenoth*, *Phamenoph*, *Ismandes*, and *Osymandyas* ; which variety is sufficient to show that the exact word was forgotten by the Egyptians, before it was committed to alphabetic writing. And we are led to the same conclusion generally, with respect to all the older designations of this kind, by a comparison of the lists of Egyptian sovereigns, transmitted to us by Manetho, Herodotus, and Diodorus Siculus ; between which there is the utmost discrepancy, till we come down to Psammeticus, in whose reign Greek writing was first taught in Egypt.

As soon as the characteristic emblems, constituting the ideagraphic names of the Egyptian sovereigns, were increased

in number to three, they were enclosed in single cartouches ; which now, however, are generally found accompanied, each of them, by a second cartouche. But in the case of such of those designations as were really of very ancient date, the second cartouches must (as has, in the first Part of my work, been proved from various considerations) have been added in later times, but still before the introduction of phonetic signs. For instance, in the second cartouche of Memnon's name there are no less than six symbols, which indicate a much fuller and, consequently, a later style of writing than that employed in the first ; and that they were not phonetically used, is evident even from the single circumstance which has been already noticed respecting this name. For if they were six letters of an alphabet, as is at present very absurdly maintained by the followers of Champollion, how is it possible that there should be such discrepance respecting a word written with so many letters, and that too among persons who had the very best means of ascertaining the powers of those supposed letters ? Some of the alphabetic representations of this word are found upon the very statue in Thebes on which the original ideographic name is inscribed ; some of them have been transmitted to us by authors who went to Egypt to study on the spot the literature of the country ; and some of them were written, not merely by native Egyptians who had learned Greek, but actually by an Egyptian priest. It is, however, beside my purpose here to enter farther into the consideration of this point ; and for fuller information on it, I must refer the reader to what I have already submitted to the public upon the subject. Undoubtedly, in the course of time, and during the progress of the hieroglyphic art, it became the custom to write ideographically the royal names in two cartouches ; and then a second was subjoined to the older designations. Still later, there is, I conceive, some reason to think that the ideographic cartouches appropriated to each sovereign's name, were, upon formal occasions, extended to a greater number, even to a very inconvenient length. Certainly, of the three long rows of car-

touches on the Table of Abydos, the last—which is the only one of them that is partly written with phonetic signs—was applied to the representation of a single name; and, consequently, it is probable that the two preceding ones were likewise confined, each of them, to the designation of a single sovereign. But, however this may be, more than two cartouches for such purpose never came into ordinary use; for, otherwise, several specimens, it is most likely, would have come down to our times of long series of pompous titles, employed to record, by suggestion, the proper names of individual kings.

Let us now turn to the Chinese designations of a corresponding nature. M. Abel-Remusat informs us that, in China, posthumous names (called *hóeï*) are decreed to men of celebrity, and that by such names alone are the emperors recorded in history. “Le * *hóeï*, est un nom posthum qu’on decerne aux hommes célèbres. Les Empereurs n’en ont pas d’autre dans l’histoire.”—*Gram. Chin.* art. 110. From the examples which he gives, I select the following :

Ching-tě-chîn-hoûng-wên-wou-hoâng-tí,

translated by him thus :

L’empereur saint, vertueux, divin, méritant, lettré, guerrier.

This pompous series, however, is not given at full length, except upon formal occasions; and the characters denoting it are usually reduced to the two which are read *Wên-tí*.^a If *Ching-tě-chîn-hoûng-wên-wou-hoâng-tí* were designated in the pages of history, solely by the collection of characters composing this ideographic denomination, or any part of it, the proper name of the monarch, it is evident, could not long survive him, and after a few ages must have been totally and irrecoverably lost. But the resemblance between this characteristic designation and

^a This name *Wên-tí*, or (as it was till very lately written by the French) *Ouên-tí*, seems to have been a very favourite one with the Chinese emperors; as it occurs frequently in the lists of the several dynasties. The last I find of this name in the lists given by P. de Mailla, mounted the imperial throne, according to that author, in the year of our era 581.

the old Egyptian ones with which I am comparing it, holds not only as to their general nature, but also in regard to the separate ingredients of which they are respectively composed; as may at once be perceived, by reference to the immediate significations of the emblems which most frequently occur in the ideographic cartouches. Thus a parallel may be fairly drawn between "Emperor" and "Sovereign King;" between "sanctity" and "the protection of, or devotedness to, the gods;" between "virtue" and "splendour;" between "divine" and "son of the sun;" or still more closely between "divine" and "divinity or godship;" between "merit" and "power" (for, among pagan nations, might has mostly constituted right); between "learning" and "the favour of the god Thouth;" between "warlike exploits" and "the subjugation of worlds."^a From this striking correspondence, however, I would by no means infer any connexion between the Chinese and Egyptian systems of writing; the very close parallelism here noticed, is only, as I conceive, the effect of vanity operating, under the same circumstances in the same manner, on the common nature of people who yet, from the great distance by which they were separated, cannot rationally be supposed to have held any intercourse with each other in ancient times.

I shall now endeavour to show the failure of the attempts

^a In the comparison above made, I have attributed to the characters in the Chinese name indifferently abstract or concrete significations, which, it is well known, equally belong to the Chinese symbols in general; as is admitted even by M. Abel-Remusat in the following passage. "Beaucoup de mots chinois peuvent être pris successivement comme substantifs, comme adjectifs, comme verbes, quelquefois même comme particules. On peut à volonté marquer précisément le sens où un mot est pris, et le rôle qu'il joue dans la proposition, ou bien laisser au lecteur le soin de le déterminer, d'après le sens du contexte et la position relative des mots."—*Gram. Chin.* art. 63. This, by the way, is a tolerably strong admission from one who contends for the great precision of Chinese writing. I have here to add, that copies of the Egyptian cartouches above referred to, together with the grounds for the primary significations I attach to their ingredients, are given at the close of the fifth chapter of my first volume.

which have been made, to gain for the Chinese the credit of having invented phonetic signs, and account for their invention by that people. In the first place, M. Abel-Remusat attributed a very remote origin to the signs in question, and dated it even as far back as the time when the symbols used in China were resemblances of the objects they were intended to denote; from which mimetic, or, as he called them, figurative characters, he conceived the transition to phonetic ones quite easy and natural. The entire invention of alphabets he disposed of as follows:—

“Parmi les différens systèmes qui ont été proposés pour expliquer l’origine de l’écriture alphabétique, l’un des plus spécieux est celui qui consiste à tirer les élémens de cette écriture, de signes figuratifs ou d’hiéroglyphes détournés de leur usage et de leur application primitive. L’idée de *peindre la parole*, d’exprimer des sons par des lignes, l’opération analytique par laquelle on distingue les parties inséparables de la syllabe pour les présenter isolément et les combiner ensuite à volonté, l’invention de l’alphabet, en un mot, semble exiger des lumières, une sagacité, des efforts d’attention et des ressources intellectuelles qu’on a peine à concilier avec l’état où l’on suppose que se trouvoient les hommes avant cette même invention. Il est plus facile, sans doute, de procéder graduellement, et d’adopter d’abord l’image d’un objet comme le signe pour le représenter; il s’établit par-là une liaison entre ce signe et le mot qui y répond dans la langue orale; il ne reste plus qu’à faire abstraction du sens de l’un et de l’autre, pour avoir de véritables signes de sons, un syllabaire, des lettres, un alphabet. Assurément, cette hypothèse, ainsi réduite à des termes généraux n’a rien d’invraisemblable.”—*Memoires de l’Inst.* tom. viii. pp. 34–5.

In the commencement of this passage our author admits the difficulty of conceiving the invention of an alphabet, looked upon as one undivided whole; but, towards its close, he asserts that difficulty to be entirely removed, by considering in detail the separate steps of the process; and it certainly is very amusing to observe the facility with which he assumes that man passed from one step to another, till his arrival at the full com-

pletion of an alphabetic system. Here, however, I have only to do with the first step, the only one, indeed, respecting which the Professor appears to have thought any explanation necessary; but it so happens, that the one which he has advanced, tells directly against the point for which he contended. Undoubtedly, when a person reads out an ideographic legend, he must necessarily pronounce the terms that are, in his language, associated with the ideas which the characters immediately signify; but the circumstance of his arriving at a word, through its close association with an idea, has evidently no tendency to make him sever it from that idea, but rather one in the very opposite direction; and the more like the mimetic figure is to the visible object which it serves to suggest to the imagination, the more difficult will the reader find it, to drive this object from his thoughts at the very moment that its picture is before his eyes, so as to employ the articulate sound arrived at, without any meaning as a mere phonetic power. Bishop Warburton clearly saw the absurdity of such an explanation of the matter, as that which has been just examined; for he, on the contrary, endeavoured to deduce the phonetic, from the ideographic use of characters, not till after those characters had lost all resemblance to the objects they were intended to signify, and had become entirely arbitrary in their shapes. Still, however, his theory on the subject is just as vulnerable as that of M. Abel-Remusat; and he only avoided one absurdity to fall into others equally glaring; as has, I will venture to say, been fully proved in the first Part of this work.

In the second place, P. Cibot tried to account for the invention of phonetic signs by the Chinese, from the necessity they were under of making use of such signs, in the representation of proper names, whether of persons or of places. His argument is conveyed in the following terms: "Soit en effet qu'on employât ou des images, ou des symbols, pour écrire les noms de personnes et les noms de lieux, il est evident qu'on faisoit abstraction de l'idée primitive qui y étoit attachée, pour n'y voir que le nom de la personne ou de l'endroit, dont le son qu'ils avoient présentoit

le souvenir."—*Mémoires &c., par les Missionnaires de Pe-kin*, tom. viii. p. 116. This statement is very true, but it has not at all the bearing on the question at issue which the author attributed to it; for, in order to a character becoming phonetic, it should be abstracted, not merely from its primitive meaning, but also from all meaning whatever, and be made to denote a mere articulate sound wholly devoid of sense, as is the case with the syllables *ba*, *be*, *bi*, &c. In fact, if P. Cibot's reasoning here were just, it would prove that all the Chinese characters were phonetic signs, since they, through their several meanings, suggest to the mind of a Chinese reader the articulate sounds that are, in his language, connected with those meanings; whereas, in reality, all of them that are significant, are strictly ideagraphic, and each is equally so, when employed to signify a man or a place of a particular name, as when it is applied to the representation of any other meaning expressed in China by the same word. Thus, for instance, of the different characters which are read by the Chinese term *Kung*, that which has been already referred to, is just as much ideagraphically used when it denotes a man or a family of the name *Kung*, as when it denotes a peacock, or the orifice of a musical instrument, or any other of the meanings of the same word which it is employed to express.

In the third place, there is in the writing of the Chinese, as compared with their language, a very peculiar property which, I admit, might by possibility lead to the conception of a phonetic use of signs; I mean the great number of characters there are in this system for each word, which, though they differ in meaning, are all read by that word, pronounced, indeed, with different tones and gesticulations, but always with the same articulate sound. The observation of a correspondence holding to this extent in any set of his characters, might possibly lead a Chinese reader to consider what those characters were in common connected with, in which way he would arrive at a sound divested of sense; and then, if any one of the set was in more constant and familiar use than the rest, the convenience might

occur to him of employing that one, to indicate the word by which each of the others was also to be read. But I must add, that the property which has been just considered depends upon another—namely, that of every character in this system answering exactly to a Chinese word—which certainly did not arise out of the system itself, but must have been derived from some external source; as may be shown, not only from the nature of ideagraphic writing in general, but still more clearly from that of the Chinese writing in particular.

In the first rude stages of the graphic art, while the writer attempted the designation only of visible objects, and of such events as admitted of being expressed in the simplest manner, the characters drawn by him would, in all probability, correspond with his words, though without any immediate reference being made by him of the one set of signs of his ideas to the other. But according as he arrived, in the progress of improvement, at more comprehensive views and a fuller expression of them in both ways, this correspondence would no longer hold; for ideas are more easily united in the meaning of a word, than graphic signs are, within the area of a compound character (as the latter species of combination cannot take place, to any extent, without some mutilation of the component parts,—a result which he would naturally be anxious to avoid); and the symbols he formed having, consequently, a less aptitude to admit of complex significations than his words, a greater number of them would become necessary for the delineation of his thoughts. Thus, from the very nature of the case, there is, in ideagraphic writing, a tendency to a disproportion between the characters employed and the words by which they are to be read;—a disproportion which must, in every variety of that writing, eventually arise, unless the process be checked by observation of designations of a wholly different kind. Accordingly, upon the Rosetta stone, which exhibits a specimen of the sacred writing of the Egyptians in its most improved state, the hieroglyphs, it may be observed, are drawn just as complete and entire, when, in combination with others, as when singly,

they answer in meaning to the words of the Greek part of the inscription ; and, in consequence of not being amalgamated into compound clusters, they remain, as separate signs, far more numerous than those words.^a There is, indeed, here visible (without, however, sufficient compactness to mark the unity of the compounds) some grouping of the characters ; but this appears to have been effected, chiefly with a view to the beauty of the writing, and to the keeping it of an even height throughout the lines ; and there is so little of correspondence between these groups of hieroglyphs and the words of the Greek, that, in most instances, it is extremely difficult to determine the precise combination of them that is to be read by each word. In fact, as the nature of his own writing would never have led the Egyptian to form compound signs to correspond with his words, so the advantage of such correspondence was not pointed out to him, by the alphabetic writing with which he was acquainted ; for, in the Greek records of his day, and for many ages after, the letters of each sentence were not distributed into separate groups, but were all written continuously, so as to present the appearance of only one enormously long word.

If we now turn to the symbols employed in the Chinese writing, the mere inspection of their structure will be sufficient to afford us the clearest and most decisive proofs, that they were compounded without any reference whatever to Chinese words ; and, consequently, will serve to show that the exact correspondence which holds between them and those words, must have been produced by some external cause altogether independent of the writing itself. Thus, for instance, the character at pre-

^a This circumstance affords the only plausible ground there is, for the erroneous opinion which at present prevails, that the Egyptian hieroglyphs were used, not as the signs of ideas, but as the letters of words ;—an opinion which, as I have shown in the first Part of my work, is, in reference to the general text of this writing outside the royal cartouches, refuted both by internal evidence of the strongest kind, and also by the express testimony of ancient authors who must have been well acquainted with the subject, and could have had no possible motive for giving a false account of it.

N^o 1 泉 *tseuen*
a fountain

白 *pih*
white

水 *shwüy*
water

N^o 2 狂 *tsae*
place

手 *show*
hand

土 *t'hoo*
ground

N^o 3 立 *leih*

N^o 4

丨 *i* 1.

|| *eul* 2.

||| *sân* 3.

× *ssé* 4.

8 *où* 5.

⊥ *loü* 6.

≡ *thsí* 7.

≡ *pă* 8.

文 *kicou* 9.

十 *chí* 10.

𠂇 *pě* 100.

千 *thsián* 1,000.

万 *wán* 10,000.

〇 *ling* 0.

N^o 5

丨 𠂇 100.

丨 || 𠂇 十 × 124.

× ⊥ 𠂇 十 8 465.

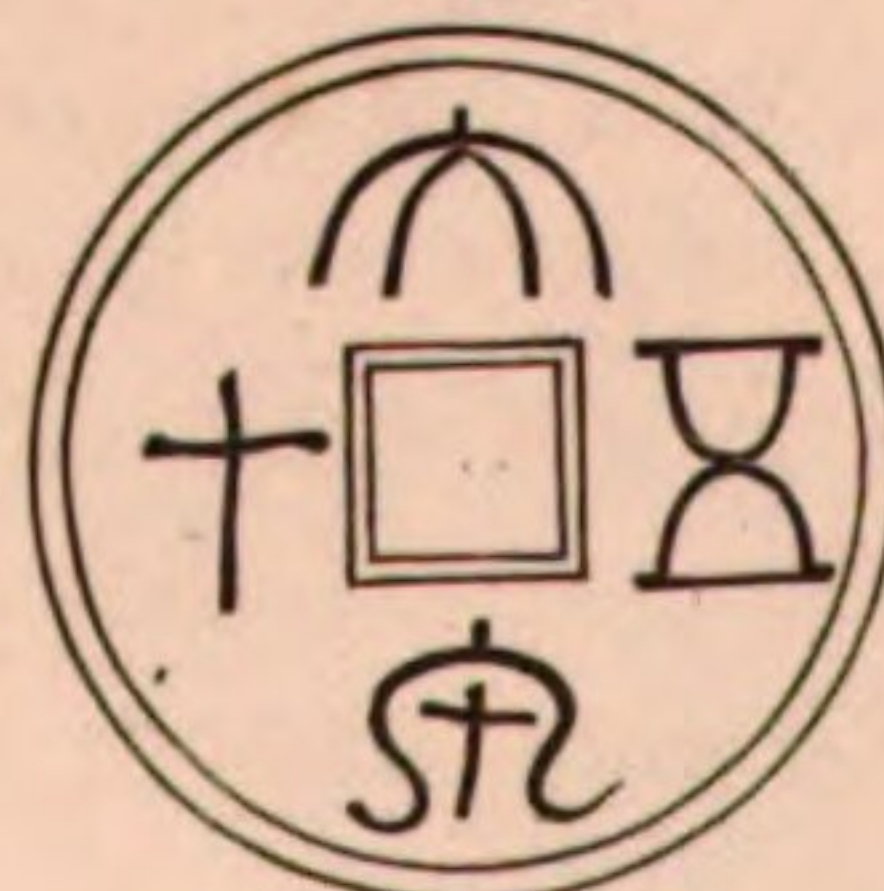
丨 𠂇 〇 = 102.

丨 𠂇 = 120.

丨 万 〇 𠂇 〇 × 10,204.

N^o 6
grande
TA

dix CHI



OU cinq fois

N^o 7 泉

N^o 7 泉

TSUEN
fontaine

sent used, in this writing, to denote “a fountain,” is composed of two others, of which the first, or upper one, signifies whiteness or “white,” and the second, “water.” But the Chinese for “white” is *pīh*, and that for “water” is *shwǔy*; and it is perfectly clear that, in no possible way, from the combination of these two words could be formed *tseuen*, the Chinese for “a fountain.” This compound symbol may be found in Chinese dictionaries under the head of the eighty-fifth radical (the emblem of water) with five additional lines; its number in the Part of Dr. Morrison’s Dictionary, which is alphabetically arranged, according to the Chinese words by which the characters are to be read, is 10851; and copies of it and of its component elements are given in Plate V. No. 1. Thus again, under the head of the thirty-second radical (the symbol for the earth) with three additional lines—its number in Dr. Morrison’s Dictionary is 10412—has been arranged the character for “place,” composed of two others, through which it immediately denotes “a hand fixed upon the ground.” But the Chinese for a hand is *show*, and that for the earth or “ground” is *t’hoo*; from the union of which it evidently would be quite impossible to derive *tsae*, the Chinese word for “place.” This character, and the two of which it is composed, are exhibited in Plate V. No. 2. Innumerable instances of the same kind might be given; but it is unnecessary to dwell longer upon a fact about which no room is left for the slightest doubt. The above two examples I have selected merely because in each of them, particularly the first, the component parts can easily be traced. This, however, is very seldom the case; for, in general, the unity of the characters which are much compounded, is effected by such a mutilation and jumbling of their ingredients, as make it extremely difficult to recognize the original elements of which they are composed: and hence the disagreement already noticed, which exists between the very best Chinese scholars, as to the composition of those characters, even in the most important of all their classes. Now, on the one hand, the mutilation of the simpler characters is obviously injurious to the Chinese writing, and directly opposed

to the natural bent of an ideagraphist, which would lead him to make the signs of his ideas as plain as he possibly could; while, on the other hand, this writing, as we have just seen, certainly did not supply the counteracting motive, arising from an immediate comparison of the more complex characters with words. The combination of these two circumstances renders it yet more manifest, that the remarkable correspondence which, notwithstanding their influence, has resulted between the characters of this system and the words of the Chinese language, must be ascribed to some cause wholly unconnected with the system itself. Still further it may be observed, that this correspondence cannot be accounted for, by the practice followed in Chinese schools, of compelling the schoolboys to get by heart a word for every character; for such practice is, evidently, not the cause, but the consequence of the phenomenon in question, and could not have commenced till after the characters had been made to agree exactly with the words, in the collections of ideas which they respectively denoted. Nor, again, can the phenomenon be accounted for, by the practice of reading out ideagraphic legends; for this practice must have equally existed in Egypt, where, yet, it certainly produced no such effect. Upon the whole, then, we must unquestionably look to a foreign origin for this phenomenon; and I have two particulars more to mention respecting it, which not only tend to draw us off from a wrong track, but also directly point our attention to the right explanation of the matter. In the first place, marks for accents are annexed to the Chinese ideagrams, whenever they are employed with unusual significations, and are, in consequence, to be read by words pronounced in an unusual manner. In the second place, the correspondence under consideration is carried so far, that characters are actually inserted in the writing of the Chinese, to answer to mere expletives in their language; of which some examples shall be given in the next chapter. It is perfectly clear, that ideagraphy could never have suggested the use of either class of signs; and that each must have originated in observation of some kind or other of alphabetic or phonetic

writing. Those, indeed, of the former description are, in all probability, not as old as the symbols to which they are joined; and may have been introduced into the system long subsequently to the original formation of those symbols, in like manner as vowel-points have, into Shemitic records. But the signs of the latter class are evidently coeval with the texts to which they belong; and are found in the oldest Chinese writings now extant, namely, those of Confucius and his immediate followers;—a circumstance which, it may be remarked by the way, affords the strongest internal evidence that the antiquity of those writings is extravagantly overrated.

In the fourth place, the Chinese dictionaries give, not only the meanings of the characters, but also their sounds; and it may, perhaps, be imagined, that the former service performed by them, might possibly have suggested the convenience of the latter, and thus have led to a phonetic use of signs. The connexion here supposed, between the two kinds of explanations, is very questionable; but, even admitting it to the fullest extent, the consequence thence attempted to be drawn, would not be made out; as it cannot be shown that these dictionaries are, in their primary use, a Chinese invention, but, on the contrary, there is very nearly a certainty, that they are of foreign origin. The notion of forming a dictionary is one which cannot be supposed to have naturally occurred to a writer whose characters did not immediately and properly denote words; and, before it would be even possible for a Chinese to frame such a book, or before a collection of the several meanings of his characters could become a collection of the several meanings of his words, as referred to those characters, it would be necessary that a perfect identity of signification should be established between the two classes of signs. That identity, I admit, has been established; but I trust, I have satisfied the reader, that it has not arisen from the nature of the Chinese graphic system, but, on the contrary, must be ascribed to imitation of some foreign writing of a totally different kind. Here I might rest the case, as to the moral impossibility of the Chinese having discovered, by their

own powers of invention, the use of dictionaries; but as the point is one of some importance in reference to Chinese literature, I shall venture to offer upon it a few additional remarks.

Some allusion has already been made to the Chinese dictionaries that are called *tonic*, in which the characters are arranged, according to the vowel-sounds terminating the words by which they are to be read. These are evidently of foreign growth, not only on account of the immediate connexion established in them between the characters and words,—a connexion to which, as we have already seen, the Chinese writing could never of itself have led,—but also in consequence of their plan being regulated by the vowel-letters of an alphabet, a set of signs quite beyond the reach of Chinese invention, and which shall presently be traced to their true external source. But as one class of the books in question is clearly and certainly due to observation of foreign examples, there arises, even from this circumstance alone, a fair presumption, that the formation of the remaining portion was arrived at in a similar manner. The case, however, is too strong to require the support of inferences merely derived from analogy; and I shall, therefore, proceed with the discussion of the subject, upon general grounds, independent of those supplied by the separate consideration of the tonic dictionaries.

In order to the original formation of a dictionary, some classification of words, regulated by the different kinds of significations they are applied to, would be necessary, which would require a low degree, at least, of grammatic skill; but so far were the Chinese from having a knowledge of grammar to this extent, in ancient times (when they boast of having achieved the invention in question), that they have not even yet arrived at it; as shall be proved in the course of next chapter. It may, perhaps, be objected that the books under examination are not dictionaries but encyclopædias, and serve to explain, not the meaning of words, but the nature of things. Let us then for a moment view them in this light; which, however, I by no means admit to be a just one; for they are, to all intents and purposes,

dictionaries in the proper sense of the term, in consequence of the complete identification which has taken place, between the collections of ideas denoted by the characters and the words of the Chinese. But supposing them to be encyclopædias, an exposition of the nature of things, it is evident, would require some classification, though not exactly a grammatical one; and a people who had succeeded in making this classification long ago, through their own sagacity and discrimination, would, by this time, have brought it to some degree of perfection, at least so far as to have removed from it all grosser faults of arrangement. But to such praise the classification in question certainly is not entitled; and, consequently, it must be looked on as merely the result of a very imperfect observation of some foreign one, whether of precisely the same, or of a different kind. The Chinese distribution of symbols is no more founded on a natural division of things, than it is on a grammatical arrangement of words; but is made to depend on the accidental circumstance of the composition of characters of the most arbitrary structure; and, even in reference to this head, it is extremely imperfect and faulty. The *keys* or *radicals* under which the compound characters are arranged, and which constitute their principal ingredients, are not uniformly placed in the same position inside those compounds; but are huddled in at random, sometimes at their top, sometimes at their bottom, sometimes at the right side, and sometimes at the left. The consequence of this irregularity, combined with the mutilation of the component parts which has been already noticed, is such, that a student must, in several instances, be acquainted with the meaning of a character, before he can find out that meaning in one of the books alluded to.

To resume the consideration of these books viewed in their proper light, as dictionaries;—for the correctness of the foregoing description of the extreme faultiness and imperfection of the Chinese arrangement of characters by their keys, I do not, I must state, rely solely on my own very limited observation of the subject, but I rest chiefly on the assertions of some of the

very best Chinese scholars and most ardent eulogizers of Chinese literature. Thus M. Klaproth, in a letter of his, of which an extract shall be given in the next chapter, charged M. de Guignes the younger, another very eminent Chinese scholar, with inability even to search for^a—to say nothing of finding out—the meaning of a certain character in one of the learned dictionaries. Surely the bare possibility of making such a charge, without incurring the imputation of extravagant absurdity, marks in the strongest manner the difficulty of consulting those dictionaries; which, again, shows the incompetence of the Chinese to construct them, even yet, in a proper manner; and this, again, points out the utter improbability of the invention having originated with that people. They, indeed, claim an enormous age for their dictionaries, far greater than that of such books in any other part of the world; but, besides that no reliance whatever can be placed upon their veracity, when their national vanity is concerned, there is, in the present instance, the additional ground for discrediting them, that if these works were half, or even a quarter, as old as is pretended, they would now be totally illegible;—a circumstance of which I trust I have already satisfied the reader, and of which more proofs will be adduced in the course of the two following chapters. Accordingly, it is to be observed, that the dictionary to which the Chinese assign the oldest date, and pretend that it was written above two thousand years ago, is now virtually admitted by their

^a The expression in the original letter is *chercher le mot*—. Possibly I may have, above, drawn a distinction, in the meaning of the verb, which the French writer did not intend to make; but the point is not of any material consequence. What is more worth noticing is the practice—a very prevalent one—of which we have here an instance; namely, that of calling a Chinese character a word. This practice, though it would be incorrect with respect to ideagrams in general, is perfectly warranted with respect to those employed in China, in consequence of the close connexion which has been established between them and words. It is in consequence of this connexion that grammatic denominations, which are applicable only in a figurative sense to the Egyptian hieroglyphs, may be given directly to the Chinese characters.

most zealous partisans to be a spurious fabrication of modern times ; as shall be more particularly shown farther on. In fine, we should not overlook the contrast which, in the history of dictionaries, so strongly holds, between the boasting tales of the Chinese and the true account of the matter, in the case in which, as is perfectly ascertained, the invention was actually made. It has been already shown how very limited in use this invention was, at its first rise among the Greeks, and what a length of time it took to reach the extent of affording an explanation of all the words of the Greek language. But no such gradual progress of the art can be found recorded by the Chinese. In the arrangement, indeed, of the characters in their dictionaries, one step of improvement is attempted to be made out, by the pretended specification of the period when, and the individual by whom, the use of the *keys* was introduced ; but, in point of extent, those dictionaries are described as having been, from the first, commensurate with all the characters at the time employed in their writing. They are, in this latter respect, represented as having—like Minerva issuing from the head of Jupiter, or like the palaces raised by the magic power of Aladdin's lamp—suddenly come into the world complete from their very commencement ;—an account of them which is quite compatible with the supposition of their plan having been learned from foreigners, but not at all so, with that of their being a Chinese invention. Thus the credit of having discovered a phonetic use of signs can no more be made out for the Chinese, through the consideration of their dictionaries, than it can, in any of the other ways by which it has been attempted to account for, and prove, their independent achievement of so important an improvement. It remains, therefore, to be considered, whether this use of their characters may not be directly shown, to have originated in their observation of a foreign system.

The portion of their phonetic practice of which it is most important to ascertain the origin, that portion, I mean, which is nearly alphabetic, can be clearly traced to a foreign source.

In order to point out, and fix the external model in imitation of which the Chinese Initials have been formed, little more will be necessary, than to place them so as that they may be immediately compared with the superior part of the alphabetic system of the Brahmans. The consonantal powers of that system, it may be seen in a preceding chapter, are as follows :

1.	k	kh	g	gh	ng
2.	ch	chh	j	jh	ng
3.	t	th	d	dh	n
4.	t	th	d	dh	n
5.	p	ph	b	bh	m
6.	y	r	l	v	—
7.	sh	sh	s	h	ksh

The Chinese Initials are read by the following series of words, in Dr. Marshman's *Clavis Sinica*, p. 89.

1.	kyen	khee	kyoon	—	yee ^a
2.	twan	t'hou	ting	—	nee
3.	chee	chhyěh	ching	—	nyang
4.	pang	p'hang	ping	—	ming
5.	fwy	fhoo	foong	—	wy
6.	tsing	ts'hing	tsoong	sin	syea
7.	tchao	tchhuen	tchang	shun	shyen
8.	ying	hyao	yu	—	hhyăh
9.	lai	yih	—	—	—

These words may be considered as the names, and their first letters, as the powers, of the Chinese consonants : I have here deviated from Dr. Marshman's representation of them no further than by merely separating the fourth column a little from

^a The fourth Initial of the first Chinese series was read by the early missionaries by a word commencing with *ng* instead of *y*; and Dr. Marshman, in his transcription of the tables of Chinese spelling, assigns to it, when placed before most of the open primary vowels, the same power; which marks better than *y*, its correspondence with the last consonant of the first Sanscrit series.

the third, in order to place it immediately under the corresponding one of the Sanscrit system.

Dr. Morrison has given the names of the Initials very nearly the same, and their order exactly the same (with the exception of the four in the eighth series), but some of the characters they are written with, quite different; which bears out his remark, that the Chinese have not yet succeeded in fixing upon one determinate set of graphic signs for this system. He states that they consider the terms of their first series as *dentals*, or sounds modified by the grinder teeth; those of the second and third series, as *linguals*; of the fourth and fifth, as *labials*; of the sixth and seventh, as *fore-dentals*; of the eighth, as *gutturals*; and the two last, as *half-linguals*, *half-dentals*. The Indian and Chinese systems are obviously formed on the same general plan; namely, of arranging the letters in classes, according to the organs of speech on which their utterance is supposed to depend, and in columns, according to certain relations held to exist between the powers of each class. It is morally impossible, that two systems could have been framed independently of each other, which, for by far their greater portions, agree so closely, and that too in such very peculiar and fanciful classifications.

The Chinese Finals cannot be brought into such close comparison with the vowels of the Sanscrit alphabet, on account of the disagreement among authors as to their exact number;—an evil which has been occasioned by the unskilfulness of the mandarins, in multiplying their varieties quite beyond the discriminating power of the human ear. M. Abel-Remusat states that the Chinese, by nice distinctions, and by joining vowel-sounds, not only in pairs but even in triplets, make them, and their different combinations, amount to 108; while he himself considers it sufficient to distinguish fifteen simple, and thirty compound vocal powers in the system (Gram. Chin. art. 47, 48). Dr. Marsham gives from the Imperial Dictionary a table of thirty-nine Finals; and distributes the terminations of the words by which he reads them, into classes of eleven open primary, eleven

open secondary, nine close primary, and eight close secondary vowel-sounds (*Clavis Sinica*, p. 99). Dr. Morrison, in his *Grammar*, has exhibited examples of thirty-three Finals; yet, in the Introduction to his *Dictionary*, which was later published, he speaks only of twelve. But amid all this discrepancy, which has originated in the mismanagement of the Chinese themselves, there is one peculiarity, common to their vowel system and that of the Brahmans, which very decisively proves them connected with each other. Among the Sanscrit vowels are included *an* or *ang*, and *ah*; and among the powers of the Chinese Finals are to be found several of the vowels followed by *n*, or *ng*, or *h*. It is utterly improbable that two parties should, in common, fall into so strange an error as to the nature of vowels, without some communication, either direct or indirect, having passed between them on the subject.

A connexion between the two systems having been proved, there can be no doubt as to the order in which they are related to each other. The Sanscrit alphabet has already been traced to western sources; and, as it cannot, by any possibility, have sprung from the Chinese Initials and Finals, it must, therefore, have immediately or remotely given rise to them. But, even independently of what has been established respecting the western origin of the Sanscrit letters, it can be shown, from various considerations, that the system of phonetic signs in question was not invented by the Chinese, and, consequently, is not the parent, but the offspring of the Hindu alphabet.

In the first place, the system of Initials could not have been originally framed for the Chinese language, as being unsuited to it; for it contains signs for more articulations than are therein to be found. The fact of the redundancy is thus attested by M. Abel-Remusat: "Les sons initiaux sont tous réputés articulés. Les Chinois en comptent 36, qui se réduisent pour nous à 26." — *Gram. Chin.* art. 46. And it is stated by Dr. Morrison, that "The thirty-six Initials of the series are redundant, more than one-third." — *Introd. to Dict.* p. vi.

In the second place, the foreign descent of the Initials is

exposed, by the circumstance of their being arranged according to the organs of speech which are supposed to be made use of, in the utterance of their powers. For, however arbitrarily and inaccurately this distribution is made, its origination yet evinces some familiarity with distinctions that are due to grammar;—an art of which the Chinese, as shall be shown in the next chapter, are, even up to the present time, wholly ignorant.

In the third place, the extent to which the mismanagement of the Initials and Finals is carried by the Chinese, betrays an ignorance of the nature of the system which is quite inconsistent with the supposition of their having attained to its use by their own exertions. Some notice has already been taken of this mismanagement of theirs in reference to one part of the system; but it is, perhaps, more conspicuously displayed in their combined application of both parts. According to the method they employ, the two characters of known pronunciation by which the sound of a third one is to be expressed, should be such, that the beginning of the monosyllable denoted by the first, together with the end of that denoted by the second, should make up the sought word. Let us, then, for a moment take a glance at their actual practice in this method of spelling. The tables of Initials and Finals in the first volume of the Imperial Dictionary, have been transcribed into alphabetic writing by Dr. Marshman in his *Clavis Sinica* (pp. 112–115); and from his copy of them I select the following examples, out of a much larger number which might be adduced of the same kind:

<i>yee</i> , combined with <i>kang</i> , gives <i>ngang</i> , instead of <i>yang</i> .					
<i>chee</i> ,	„	<i>kung</i> ,	„	<i>ching</i> ,	„ <i>chung</i> .
<i>ying</i> ,	„	<i>kung</i> ,	„	<i>ung</i> ,	„ <i>yung</i> .
<i>nyang</i> ,	„	<i>kun</i> ,	„	<i>yin</i> ,	„ <i>nun</i> .
<i>t'hou</i> ,	„	<i>king</i> ,	„	<i>t'hi</i> ,	„ <i>t'hing</i> .
<i>yu</i> ,	„	<i>koo</i> ,	„	<i>hwoo</i> ,	„ <i>yoo</i> .
<i>twan</i> ,	„	<i>kwy</i> ,	„	<i>tsooi</i> ,	„ <i>twy</i> .

Sea, with *kee*, gives, not only *see*, but also *tse*, *ts'he*, *se*; and, what is still more unaccountable, *yih*, with *kee*, gives, not only

yee, but also *irr*. Upon the strange misspellings among which these are included, the transcriber, though prejudiced in favour of the system, observes: "In some instances, the reader will find the monosyllable differ *somewhat* from the natural expression of the Initial and Final. This is to be ascribed either to the provincial pronunciation, or the caprice of my Chinese assistants, from whom I preferred taking the actual pronunciation, to forming a factitious one from the Initial and Final."—*Clavis Sinica*, p. 111. But Dr. Morrison assigns a more adequate cause of the phenomenon:—"One who has been taught the art of spelling according to the alphabetic system, wonders at the extreme deficiency of the Chinese, otherwise tolerably well acquainted with letters, when they try to obtain the pronunciation of a word by the syllabic spelling;^a as from *ting* and *kea*, to derive *hëa*, instead of *ta*, is an example which does not exaggerate their blunders."—*Introd. to Dict.* p. vii. Now, surely, if they had, of themselves, discovered the use of the Initials and Finals, they must have understood the nature of their own discovery well enough, at least, to enable them to avoid such very gross blunders, as those which have been just adduced.

In the fourth place, the external, and, still further, the Indian origin of the system of Initials and Finals is admitted by the Chinese themselves; and, although their testimony is, in general, entitled to very little attention, yet, when, as in the present instance, it is given in opposition to the dictates of national vanity, its correctness may, in a great measure, be relied on. Dr. Morrison, after quoting from the Imperial Dictionary a passage of a Chinese author to the above effect, proceeds as follows. "This system is further spoken of, as being derived from the country * *Fan*, from which sprung the religion of * *Füh* [sometimes written *Fo*, the Chinese name for Būddha], and which place is commonly said to be some part of * *Tsang*,

^a The author here means by "syllabic spelling," not the making use of syllabic signs, but the combining those of a superior kind, namely, the Initials and Finals, for the expression of syllables.

which is Tibet. The introduction of the thirty-six initial sounds is attributed to * * *Shin-k'he*, a priest of Füh; and it is said the system was much employed, * * * * * *E t'hung shih she che shoo yu Chung-kwö*, 'to give currency to the books of Füh in China.' I shall quote one more testimony [Dr. Morrison continues], which shows the period in which it became prevalent, as well as from whence it originated.

* * * * * *Fan ts'hëë che heö tsze Se yüh jüh Chung-kwö, che Tse Leang shing hing*. 'The syllabic spelling entered China from the West, and prevailed extensively under the Dynasties *Tse* and *Leang*;' answering nearly to A. D. 500."—*Introd. to Dict.* p. v. And in a note of the same page our author gives the following statement, as the substance of information derived by him from a Chinese work to which he refers by name. "About A. D 950 a * * * a *Po-lo-mun* [Brahman] Priest was at Peking; and by order of the Emperor * * *Këen-tih*, 300 * * *Sha-mun* [Priests] went to India to procure books, &c.—"

With respect to the dates contained in the above extracts, I have here, by the way, to warn the reader that they are not at all to be depended on. For, as I hope to prove to his satisfaction in the ensuing chapters, the Chinese, notwithstanding all their boasting, have in reality no knowledge of the time of the occurrence of events of any very great distance from the present day. All, therefore, that those extracts serve to prove is, that, at some very remote but unknown period, Sanscrit books were introduced into China, and the Sanscrit writing learned by the Chinese priests of a numerous and powerful sect. From another source, however, a limit to the remoteness of this period can be derived, which takes in the latter of the dates above specified, and reaches about a century still farther back. By means of the Sino-Syriac inscription, it is perfectly ascertained that a Christian Church, considerable in point both of numbers and of influence, existed within the Celestial Empire twenty years before the close of the eighth century; though all traces of it have since disappeared from the pages of Chinese

history. Now, if we seek the earliest period at which the Church in question could have become forgotten in China, we shall find that, even under the circumstances most conducive to the acceleration of this result,—viz. supposing, in the first place, that this Church was destroyed very soon after the erection of the monument referred to; in the second place, that a series of heavy national calamities ensued, which turned the attention of the public in other directions; and, in the third place, that the graphic system of the Chinese was then so defective, as not to afford means of preserving the memory of events, longer than they could be kept in recollection through the aid of oral tradition;—still it is scarcely possible that the fate of the Sino-Syriac Church, and the particulars connected with its downfall, could have been wholly effaced from the minds of the Chinese people before the middle of the ninth century. But their learned men could hardly have had access to the Hindu alphabetic system, until every vestige of this Church was lost in China; as they otherwise would have had the power of transmitting to us some account of it; and, notwithstanding any assertions to the contrary that have been since made for the purpose of disguising the true state of the case,^a it is quite evident that they would have availed themselves of this power, if they really had it. The Būddhite priesthood would have gladly recorded any misfortunes they heard of, that had befallen the professors of a creed which they detested; and the Chinese

^a M. Renaudot states, upon the authority of P. Couplet, that the reason assigned by the Mandarins for the total silence of Chinese history respecting the circumstances recorded in the Sino-Syriac inscription, is, that no notice is taken in their annals of the concerns of foreigners;—a reason the fallacy of which even a slight acquaintance with those annals is sufficient to enable one to see through. Thus frequent mention is therein made of the worshippers of Fo, that is, of the Būddhites; a sect whose religion, surely just as much as Christianity, is a foreign one in reference to China. The following are M. Renaudot's words upon this point: "Ce que le P. Couplet en a mis dans sons abrégé historique, est tiré de cetté Inscription, et il a reconnu luy-mesme qu'il n'en estoit fait aucune mention dans les histoires Chinoises, parce que les Chinois n'y rapportent pas ce qui regarde les estrangers."—*Anciennes Relations des Indes et de la Chine*, &c. p. 255.

board of history—considering the paucity of the historical materials within their reach, in comparison with the great length of time over which they had to spread them in their annals,—would not have neglected to make use of the traces of events which were thus preserved for them. The first importation, therefore, of Sanscrit books into China cannot reasonably be admitted to have taken place before the epoch which has been just pointed out, namely, the middle of the ninth century.

Here I should conclude my proof of the Indian origin of the superior phonetic signs of the Chinese, but that Dr. Marshman reversed the order of the connexion which I have made out between their system of Initials and Finals and the Sanscrit alphabet of consonants and vowels. And, as the opinions of this author upon points relating to Chinese literature are, in general, entitled to respect, I think it right to examine the grounds on which this particular one was maintained by him. The investigation will, I expect, tend to confirm the correctness of what I have already urged upon the subject; and it will, besides, give me an opportunity of fixing, by the internal evidence which the case supplies, the exact route by which the Sanscrit writing was introduced into China.

The two systems of consonants are brought into immediate comparison in the *Clavis Sinica* (p. 136), in the manner exhibited in the following Table :

CONSONANTS.

CHINESE.					SUNGSKRIT.				
1. k	kh	k	—	y or ng	1. k	kh	g	gh	ng
3. ch	chh	ch	—	ny	2. ch	chh	j	jh	ny
—	—	—	—	—	3. t	t'h	d	dh	n
2. t	t'h	t	—	n	4. t	t'h	d	dh	n
4. p	p'h	p	—	m	5. p	p'h	b	bh	m
5. f	fh	f	—	w	—	—	—	—	w
6. ts	ts'h	ts	s	s	—	—	—	—	s
7. tch	tchh	tch	sh	sh	—	—	—	sh	sh
8. y	h	y	—	hh	—	h	y	—	—
9. l	y	—	—	—	l	—	—	—	—

With respect to the arrangement—in the part of the above Table relating to the Sanscrit system—of the miscellaneous consonants which come after the five regular series, it is merely that of Dr. Marshman himself. He imagined that seven out of the nine miscellaneous Indian letters were selected by the Hindus from the several lower Chinese series; and, of the remaining two, he omitted *r*, because it must have been derived from some other source, and the last, because it is only a compound of two others. His principal reasons for supposing the Indian system the derivative one, are contained in two passages, of which the first runs thus: “— the Chinese series seems the boldest but the rudest sketch; the Sungskrit alphabet, the most improved system. The Chinese colloquial medium possesses the greatest number of series; the Sungskrit system has improved all it has adopted, and retained the most distinct of the powers in each of the remaining Chinese series —.” *Clavis Sinica*, p. 138. Here it is implicitly assumed, that, in the use of phonetic signs, the course of alteration must always be in the line of improvement, and, consequently, that the Indian system being the better one, must have been that which was later formed, and the offspring of the other. But the assumption is completely disproved, on the one hand by the example of the Hindus, whose alphabet is far inferior to the models from which it was derived, and on the other, by that of the Chinese, whose phonetic practice has moved in the very opposite direction to that of improvement. The second passage referred to, is as follows: “— although it is easy to retain a part of a series, and dismiss the rest, it is not equally easy to take a part and supply the rest. For the Chinese to take *w* as a part of a series, and by reasoning thereon, to add *f* and *fh*; to ascend from *s* and add *ts* and *tsh*; to adopt *sh*, and supply from their own invention *tch* and *tchh*, must imply a degree of orthoepial sagacity which ill agrees with their rejecting *g*, and *j*, and *d*, and *b*, and *r*, found in the same system.”—*Clavis Sinica*, p. 142. The assertion made in this extract—that it is easier to curtail a larger system than to supply, by means of invention, the defects

of a smaller one—may very possibly be correct; but it has nothing to do with the case under consideration. For, supposing the Chinese had borrowed four of their series from a foreign source, their forming four more after the analogy of those previously learned, could not be called invention; it would be little more than mere imitation.

In justice to Dr. Marshman, I must observe, that he was not very decided in his opinion on this subject; and that he candidly put forward a difficulty with which it is beset, and which, when duly considered, will, I think, be found wholly to overturn it. His account of this difficulty is as follows: “The first sound, in the first five of these series [that is, according to a European view of the subject, the first *power* in each series. Our author here speaks in the Asiatic style, as if consonants had vowels essentially inherent in them, and so, in fact, were syllabic signs], is a simple sound, the second is an aspirate, and the fourth a nasal. But what is the third sound? and wherein does it differ from the first? These are questions to which I have never been able to obtain a satisfactory answer. It is true that the Chinese esteem it nearly the same with the first; but still it is improbable that in a series of four sounds, given, not merely in the Imperial Dictionary, but in those which preceded it, two sounds should be precisely alike. If we examine the Sungskrit alphabet, to which the Chinese system bears a surprising likeness, we shall find that, while the first letter in each series is a simple sound, and the second an aspirate, precisely like those in the first eight series of the Chinese Initials, their third sound is the first letter of the series softened: thus in the first series, *ku*^a is

^a The first vowel in the Sanscrit system,—namely, that which the pandits consider as essentially inherent in every consonant when it has not a vowel-mark attached to it,—is, like the Sheva of the Masorets, pronounced so rapidly and, in consequence, so indistinctly, that the ear cannot easily distinguish to which of the Roman vowels it corresponds. It is now generally represented by a short *a*; but, at first, Europeans denoted it by a short *u*; as, it may be observed, was Dr. Marshman’s practice. Hence it is, that he wrote *Sungskrit* for *Sanscrit*, and so on.

softened to *gu*; in the second series, *chu* is softened to *ju*; in the third, *tu* is changed for *du*; and in the fifth, *pu* is softened to *bu*. Now *g*, *j*, *d*, and *b*, are the sounds in which the Chinese are deficient. Did the authors of the Chinese system insert these four initial powers in the system, though useless, out of compliment to the Sungskrit system? or had they some faint idea that there once existed sounds, if now lost, which in some degree differed from *k*, *ch*, *t*, and *p*, and in the same degree approximated to *g*, *j*, *d*, and *b*? If they did it in compliment to the Sungskrit system, whom did they intend to compliment thereby? and why did they not go farther, and adopt the fourth sound of the Sungskrit series, *gh*, *jh*, *dh*, *bh*, &c., as well as the third?"—*Clavis Sinica*, p. 90.

Certainly, on the supposition on which Dr. Marshman virtually grounded his reasoning, that the Chinese was the parent system, it would be extremely difficult, or rather impossible, to account for its having the powers in the third column exactly the same as in the first; for this circumstance is not to be explained by an imagined difference between those powers that could not be expressed by means of Roman letters, since the Chinese themselves acknowledge there is in reality no such difference. But if the supposed order of relationship between the two systems be reversed, and the Chinese be admitted to be the derivative one, then the phenomenon in question can be solved in a very natural and obvious manner. The Chinese not having in his language any sounds commencing with the powers denoted by *g*, *j*, *d*, *b*, and, consequently, not having his organs of speech fitted in early life to their utterance, the nearest approach he could make to them would be by articulating the cognate powers *k*, *ch*, *t*, *p*. Of course, then, if the framer of the Chinese colloquial medium, taking the system of consonants in the Sanscrit alphabet as his model, attempted to pronounce words commencing with the articulations of the third column, he could give utterance only to those of the first over again; and, in consequence, the powers of his own first and third columns would necessarily be the same. The actual identity, therefore, of

those columns, as to the articulate powers they display, clearly shows, either that he must have had the Indian exemplar immediately in view when composing his system, or have simply copied so far from some other one formed according to the above conditions.

The correctness of the solution which has been just submitted to the reader, may be experimentally put to the test by means of the Tibetan alphabet; because this alphabet is confessedly derived from the Sanscrit system, and because the Tibetans want in their language the articulations *b*, *d*, *g*, and *z*, of which the last approaches nearly to the modern power of *j*. But it will be found, upon examination, that the very effect whose origin I have attributed to the combination of those two causes in the case of the Chinese system, has been actually thereby produced in the one now under consideration; and for proof of the fact I shall appeal to Dr. Marshman himself, who supplies me with the following evidence upon the subject:—“In the ‘*Alphabetum Tangutanum sive Tibetanum*,’ printed at Rome in 1773, the Tibet alphabet is detailed at large; and with it agree two copies of the Bootan alphabet, the one brought from that country by Dr. Carey, in 1798, and the other by a friend about four years ago. This alphabet is derived from the Nagree or Sungskrit system, and some of the letters resemble the corresponding ones in the Bengalee alphabet. It contains eight series; the last of which has only two powers.^a The first four of these are the *k*, *t*, *ch*, and *p* series, common to both the Sungskrit and Chinese systems; but the alphabet is alike destitute of the *f* series of the Chinese system, and of the double modification of the *t* series found in the Sungskrit system. The fifth series of this alphabet, *ts*, *tzh*, &c. is evidently the *ts*, *ts’h* series of the Chinese system; and amidst the sixth and seventh, vestiges of the other sibilant series may be traced. But the

^a Præceptores Tibetani has consonantes in octo ordines distribuunt. In unoquoque ordine litteras quatuor collocant, ultimo excepto, cui duas tantum tribuunt.—*Alphabetum Tibetanum*, p. 13.

most singular feature in this descendant of the Sungskrit system is, that the four first series, instead of possessing five letters like the Nagree alphabet, have only four; the second aspirate in the series is wanting, as it is in the Chinese system; and like that system too, *the first and third letters of each series have the same sound affixed to them.* Hence the author of the *Alphabetum Tibetanum*, P. Georgius, says that the Tibet alphabet is, among other letters, deficient in *b, g, d, and z,*^a which are those we have already remarked as found in the Sungskrit system, but not in the Chinese.—*Clavis Sinica*, p. 146.

In the work to which Dr. Marshman refers, as his principal authority for the above description of the Tibetan alphabet, the powers of the system are thus represented :

1.	kha	ka	kha	ngha
2.	ciha	cia	ciha	gnia
3.	tha	ta	tha	na
4.	pha	pa	pha	ma
5.	tzha	tza	tzha	va
6.	sciha	ha	sa	ja
7.	ra	scia	la	sa
8.	ha	—	aa	—

The appearance of some difference between this Table and our author's description may, in a great measure, be accounted for, by the peculiar mode of expressing certain consonantal powers which is practised in Italian orthography;^b but at all events, upon the main point to which I wish to direct the reader's attention,—the identity of two columns throughout most of the series,—the Englishman and Italian are completely agreed.

^a Litteræ quæ deficiunt in Tibetana lingua sunt septem, scilicet : B, D, F, G, Q, X, Z.—*Alphab. Tib.* p. 47.

^b Upon the various modes of expressing the same articulate sound which are employed by different European nations, the following illustration, taken from a French work, may perhaps be found amusing. “Ce qu'un François écrit *tchai*, par exemple, un Portugais l'écrit *chai*, un Polonois *czai*, un Allemand *tschai*, et un Italien *ciai*.”—*Memoires, &c. par les Missionnaires de Peking*, tom. viii. p. 202.

It is, however to be remarked, that, although the powers in the first and third of the columns, as far down as the regular series extend, are the same, yet the Tibetan scholar contrives to make a distinction between them, by annexing different intonations to the words commencing with those articulations ; so that the third column is not useless in his system, as it is in the Chinese one. It is most likely, therefore, that the deviation from the Sanscrit alphabet which is now under consideration, was made by the Tibetan, and passively received by the Chinese. For it would be very strange indeed, if the latter operating immediately on the parent system, retained one, and rejected another, of two columns that were equally useless to him ; whereas there is nothing at all surprising, or inconsistent with the extreme clumsiness of his general phonetic practice, in the supposition of his having adopted a certain portion of a derivative plan just as he found it, without taking the trouble, or exercising the discretion, of rejecting such of the ingredients as were of no service to him. Hence it follows, with a high degree of probability, that he was guided in his choice and arrangement of the Initials, by observation of the Tibetan syllabary ; while, on the other hand, their consonantal quality, as well as the expression of vowels by means of the Finals, could not have been learned from an alphabet which contains only syllabic letters, and must, consequently, have been suggested to him by an immediate reference to the parent Sanscrit system. But the conclusion thus deduced from the very nature of the case, is also supported by external evidence of some weight ; as, for instance, one of the extracts from the works of Chinese authors, already quoted in proof of the Initials and Finals having been introduced into China from India, serves equally to show that they were at the same time brought thither from Tibet. And the credibility of this evidence is strengthened by the agreement which may be observed to hold between its parts. For the persons who are therein attested to have been the bearers of the phonetic signs in question, are described as priests of Fo or Būddha ; and so belonged to a sect of pagans who have, for many ages past, established

their head-quarters in Tibet, from which place they send, wherever their missionaries are received, the Tibetan version of the Būddhistic sacred records, along with the original Sanscrit or Pali text. That they should, then, have effected the simultaneous introduction of both kinds of writing into the Celestial Empire, is in itself a very likely circumstance; since it fully accords with what is known to have long been their constant practice in similar cases. I have only to add, that the various considerations which tend to prove that Tibetan books were brought into China as early as Sanscrit or Pali records, contribute also powerfully to support the limit I have assigned to the remoteness of the period when those importations first took place; for it is now very generally admitted that the alphabetic system of the Tibetans is not older than the seventh century, and it probably had a still more recent commencement: but it cannot be supposed to have, till long after its rise in Tibet, been carried thence onward as far as China.

The system of Initials and Finals having now been traced home to the actual sources of its construction, a comparison of its elements with their Indian and Tibetan models will serve to show to what an extent it has suffered in the hands of the Chinese: it is, indeed, no longer entitled, in strictness, to the rank of an alphabet, having become indeterminate in the number, not only of its characters, but also of its powers, at least, of its vowel powers; and its utility has, in consequence, been so much reduced, that the employment of it is at present very nearly abandoned. This disimprovement, produced immediately by gross phonetic bungling, of which some specimens have been given, must be ascribed furthermore to the influence of predominant ideagraphic habits as its adequate primary cause; for it is found to vary in the systems employed in different places, exactly according to the rate at which those habits prevail. Thus, for instance, the Japanese, and all the Indo-Chinese nations of whom the alphabetic practice has been as yet ascertained, make use of syllabaries which, as well as the system of Initials and Finals, are descended in common from the Sans-

crit alphabet; and, if these derivative systems be compared together, each of the syllabaries is so much worse, in the same proportion as the nation employing it has greater intercourse with China; while the Chinese scheme, though exhibiting evident remains of an alphabet of the superior class, is by far the worst of all. But the unskilfulness and mismanagement of the Chinese, which have directly led to this extreme deterioration of the system of Initials and Finals, are equally conspicuous in their employment of the inferior class of phonetic signs; since they are in the habit of using such signs in ways productive of the greatest confusion, frequently making the same character stand for different articulate sounds, and different characters for the same sound; as we have already seen admitted by M. Abel-Remusat. The deteriorating effects, therefore, of their ideographic habits pervade the whole of their phonetic writing, and have an evident tendency to destroy it;—a tendency which surely would in time produce its effect, if it were not continually interrupted by intercourse with alphabetic nations. But a cause which essentially tends to put an end to their phonetic practice, could never, it is obvious, have given rise to any part of that practice. The attempts to make out a Chinese origin for phonetic signs have been examined in some preceding paragraphs of this chapter, and their futility exposed; but here we have a positive proof, founded on actual observation, that no class of such signs could have originated in ideographic writing;—a proof which strongly confirms the theoretic one given to the same effect in the first Part of my work. The inferior phonetic signs, therefore, of the Chinese, as well as their system of Initials and Finals, must have sprung from a foreign source; and both classes were probably suggested by a reference, more or less immediate, to the same pattern, the Sanscrit alphabet. For if they had derived any syllabic signs from Syriac writing, and had been able to retain them till the commencement of their communication with the Būddhistic priesthood, they would, I apprehend, when taught the Hindu consonants and vowel-letters, have been in a condition to make a much better use of

those models than they have done ; and the process of deterioration in the signs they thence derived, which has since gone on, in spite of their increased intercourse with alphabetic writers, would have been less rapid and extensive than it has been. All, however, that is certain with respect to their present phonetic signs of the inferior class, is, that they are of foreign extraction ; but, this point being fixed, it is very immaterial to determine whether they are ultimately to be traced altogether to an Indian, or in part to an older alphabet.

From the principal effects of alphabetic light upon the graphic system here treated of, I turn to the consideration of two of a different nature, which have arisen more indirectly and, in consequence, less obviously from the same cause. In the first place, as there are no capital letters in the Syriac, so neither are there in the Sanscrit ; whence there is no peculiar mark used in either kind of writing to point out proper names to the eye of a reader : and to this omission—more especially as observed in the latter kind—may, I conceive, be attributed the circumstance of the Chinese having failed to enlarge, or otherwise change, their characters when applied to the designation of men. For if so useful a distinction had existed in the Hindu alphabet from which they certainly derived other important graphic improvements, they would hardly have overlooked this one. They, indeed, now occasionally combine their character for a mouth with those intended for denominative signs. They, however, do so but seldom, from which it may be inferred that the practice is not of very long standing ; and possibly it was suggested to them by their observation of the European manner of writing names differently from other words. Of the injurious consequences resulting from their habitual neglect of this distinction, some examples have been given in a preceding chapter, and more will be added in the course of that which next follows.

In the second place, I have to advert to an effect of a more positive nature ; the constant correspondence, I mean, between the ideagrams and words of the Chinese ; which holds to such an extent that, even when an expletive occurs in their spoken

expression of a series of thoughts, a character equally unmeaning is always introduced into the corresponding place in the written expression of the same series; as will be more particularly shown in the next chapter. Although this property of their graphic method may not perhaps, at first view, appear strange to a person accustomed to an alphabetic system, the elements of which are, in his mode of employing them, immediately connected with his words; yet it has, I submit, been fully proved in the foregoing pages, to be not only repugnant generally to the nature of all ideagraphic writing advanced beyond a rudimental state, but even still more so to that of Chinese writing in particular; and, consequently, its origin can be ascribed solely to imitation of some foreign practice. But a Chinese could not have learned the above property from the distribution, made in Sanscrit writing, of the letters into separate groups to correspond with the terms; as he would inevitably be led by the monosyllabic nature of his own language to consider the Sanscrit syllables as words, and so be prevented from taking notice of the correspondence in question. It is, besides, to be remarked, that the Sanscrit tongue abounds in very long compounds, which though an Indian would look upon as single words, yet certainly a Chinese could not (at least until he acquired a far more intimate acquaintance with alphabetic writing than ideagraphists usually arrive at); for when he came to know the full meaning of any of those compounds, he would be under the necessity of expressing it, in his own language or writing, by a plurality of signs. And both these reasons likewise preclude the possibility of Syriac writing having formerly suggested to him the correspondence under consideration; as this is also a polysyllabic language; and although its terms are not as much compounded as those of the Sanscrit, yet, on account of the prefixes and affixes attached to many of them, he would frequently have occasion to express the meaning of a single Syriac word or group by two or three of his own signs, whether verbal or graphic. There is, however, a peculiarity in Sanscrit writing that has, in a preceding chapter, been traced to its Abyssinian

source, and which clearly accounts for the introduction into the Chinese system of the property referred to. Whenever a Sanscrit simple syllable commences with an articulation, and so far agrees with Chinese words, it is always represented by a single character. The vocal part of the syllable, it is notorious, is in such cases not denoted by a separate letter, but merely by a mark modifying the shape of the consonant or consonants with which it is connected. But what I wish here particularly to direct attention to, is the fact that, although in the commencing articulation of the syllable in question there may be combined two, three, or even four consonantal powers, yet the letters of those powers are constantly and invariably contracted into a single character, no matter how much they may, for that purpose, be mutilated and disfigured. Now, precisely in the same manner in Chinese writing, no matter how many ideas may be contained in the signification of a word, the symbols expressive of those ideas are jumbled and compressed together, so as that always, without exception, there results a single character for each word. I must add, that no such peculiarity as that which has been just described, is to be found in either the Syriac or any other Shemitic method of writing.^a The correspondence, therefore, between the Chinese symbols and words, which is unquestionably of extrinsic origin, is not only completely, but also exclusively identified in its source with a very distinguishing feature of the Sanscrit system.

The discussion of this point supplies the means of establishing a limit to the age of Confucius. It has been already shown that the Indian books which the priests of Būddha brought with them, could not have been introduced into China before the middle of the ninth century; and perhaps near half a century more should be allowed for the attainment, by ideagraphists, of

^a The singleness of the characters by which simple syllables are represented in the Ethiopic system, is never produced by contracting a plurality of letters into one character, but arises merely from the uncompounded nature of the articulations with which the syllables in that system always commence.

such a degree of familiarity with Sanscrit writing as would enable them to imitate any of its properties, particularly the one above examined, which must have been quite alien from their previous practice. The precise correspondence, therefore, which now exists between the Chinese ideagrams and words, is very unlikely to have commenced much sooner than the end of the ninth century. But this correspondence holds in the writing of Confucius exactly in the same manner as it does in that of the present day; for the *tchhouan* characters which he is stated to have made use of, tally, symbol for symbol, with those of modern date, as will be shown in the chapter after next. If, then, the treatises ascribed to him and his disciples, were originally composed in this character, as is on all sides affirmed, we are unavoidably led to the conclusion, that he could not have flourished very long before the end of the ninth century. I admit, however, the possibility of the symbols employed by him to express his thoughts, having been gradually changed by transcribers, according as the Chinese graphic system was altered; and, on the supposition of this having been actually the case, the criterion here brought under notice would not limit the age of the immediate writing of the Chinese sage, but only that of the last alteration it had undergone. But changes made only in this way, can hardly be supposed to have been carried to the extent of requiring the introduction of additional words in the reading of any text; as they, then, would become corruptions of that text, and be of the nature of spurious interpolations. The symbols, therefore, in the works of Confucius, which answer to expletives in the Chinese language, must be considered as original ingredients of his text;^a and, as the use of

^a By the above reasoning I do not mean to have it implied, that there are no interpolations whatever in the works of Confucius; on the contrary, I hold the series of eclipses which are now found recorded in the *Tchun-tsiou*, to be a spurious addition to the narrative, derived from some foreign source, and not an original part of that historical composition: they are isolated passages quite detached from the general text, which might have been easily inserted in it, while as yet the book was read only by the learned, who were interested in the

such signs in ideagraphic legends could not have commenced till after the exact correspondence under examination had first been produced, their appearance in his compositions leaves scarcely room for doubt as to the correctness of the limit above affixed to his antiquity. There are, besides, other circumstances, quite independent of the nature of our author's writing, which conduct us to either the same limit, or one not much differing therefrom, without this application of them being, in the remotest degree, liable to the foregoing objection. They shall be submitted to the reader's judgment, as occasion offers, in the course of the ensuing chapters.

The origin of the phonetic use of signs among the Chinese having been traced home to its actual source in India, I shall here notice a few circumstances which serve to point out, that the astronomy, the chronology, and the arithmetic of this people have been derived from the same quarter. The fundamental principle of the Indian astronomy, we have already seen, was to select, *ad libitum*, a very remote point of time from which the motions of the heavenly bodies should be computed, and to assume that, at that instant, the sun, moon, and five planets known to the ancients, were all in conjunction in the vernal equinox;—an assumption which greatly simplified calculation. As to the errors of computation which thence necessarily resulted, those respecting mean motions were reduced in the same proportion as the distance of the selected epoch was extended, so that they could be rendered indefinitely small; and although those in the mean places could not, for any considerable interval, be got rid of in the same way, yet when in the course of time they became so large as to cause a sensible difference between calculated and observed longitudes, all that was necessary was to remodel the

success of the forgery; and there was an obvious reason for the insertion, namely, to give a fictitious authority to an altered system of dates. But neither observation applies to the symbols corresponding to expletives, which appear in his writing; as they are intimately blended with the other elements of that writing, and no conceivable motive can be assigned for their introduction into the text at any period after its original formation.

system, so as to accommodate it to the existing state of the heavens; while the experience of its previous failure would naturally suggest the advantage of making it commence from a still remoter epoch. Hence the enormous and successively increasing magnitudes of the Indian cycles. But as the Brahmans arbitrarily fixed the times of events, by referring to certain points in their cycles; according as those points went backward, the corresponding dates were of course continually removed farther and still farther back into the boundless regions of a visionary and unknown antiquity. Now traces of all this process are to be found likewise in the practice of the Chinese savans. The continued extension of their history to dates more and more remote, will be considered in the chapter after next; and I shall, therefore, for the present confine myself to the astronomical part of the case.

In the translation of the Chinese annals by P. de Mailla, a very striking instance may be seen of the application of the Indian principle in question, in the imaginary reign of the emperor *Tchuen-hio*, which is represented to have lasted seventy-eight years, commencing from a date corresponding to the year B. C. 2514. The passage to which I refer, is as follows:—
 “Après plusieurs années de travail, *Tchuen-hio* déterminâ qu’à l’avenir l’année commenceroit à la lune la plus proche du premier jour du printems, qui vient vers le quinzième degré du *Verseau*; et comme il savoit, par le calcul qu’il en avoit fait, que dans une des années de son règne les planètes devoient se joindre dans la constellation *Che* (constellation qui occupe dix-sept degrés dans le ciel, dont le milieu est vers le sixième degré^a

^a P. de Mailla appears to have written here by mistake the sixth degree of *Pisces*, instead of the twenty-sixth. For in the year 1738, when he addressed his third letter to M. Freret, the star *Algenib* in the wing of Pegasus, which is at the eastern extremity of the Chinese constellation *Che*, had, according to his statements in that letter, the longitude, γ $5^{\circ} 22' 29''$; from which if we subduct half the extent he assigns to this constellation, we shall find its middle point at γ $26^{\circ} 52' 29''$.

des *Poissons*), il choisit cette année là^a pour la première de son calendrier, d'autant plus que cette même année le soleil et la lune se trouvoient en conjonction le premier jour du printemps."—*Histoire Générale de la Chine*, tom. i. p. 34. In one of the translator's letters to M. Freret, which are prefixed to the first volume of his work, he has expressed the meaning of the Tartar version of the original passage as follows:—"Lorsque l'empereur *Tchuen-hio* fit le calendrier, il établit le commencement de l'année au commencement du printemps. Cette année le premier jour de la première lune on étoit entré dans le printemps, les cinq planètes s'assemblerent au ciel; on avoit passé la constellation *Che*."—*Lettre III. &c.* p. clii. And in the same letter he has given the original, with the Latin for each character placed immediately after it; so that this last translation, being made word for word, is put forward as the most strictly correct of all three. The Latin runs thus:—"Imperator fecit Kalendarium ut principii veris Luna esset prima. Hoc anno primæ Lunæ primâ die præcesserat ver, quinque planetæ convenere in cœlo, transmissâ constellatione *Che*."—p. clv.

From a comparison of the three versions it may be clearly collected, that the original here exhibits an imitation of the practice of the Indian astronomers, and the adoption of the principle on which all their calculations are grounded. The ordinary period, indeed, of the commencement of the year and of spring in China,—which is fixed upon the new moon that occurs on, or next after, the day of the sun's reaching, in his apparent course, the middle of the sign Aquarius,—is different from the commencement of the Indian year; and as no more particular specification of the time is given, P. de Mailla was, I admit, justified in understanding that ordinary period to be here spoken of. But still the placing the imaginary conjunction of seven of the heavenly bodies at exactly the beginning of the year in each astronomical system, no matter what may have

^a In the margin of the text is inserted, to tally with this year, the date 2461, B. C.

been the difference between those beginnings, sufficiently connects the two systems; and their identification, as far as depends upon showing that they are based upon a common principle, is completed by the first part of the Chinese account. For it is therein stated that the Chinese formerly made the year of the fictitious occurrence in question the first of their calendar; from which it follows, that they selected the commencement of this year as the epoch from which the motions of the celestial bodies were to be computed. They have since adopted an earlier astronomical and chronological epoch, showing in this respect still further their imitation of Indian practice; and they now make their computations commence,—according to the statement of the Abbé Grosier in his *Description de la Chine*, liv, xiii. c. 3,—from the sixty-first year of the reign of the emperor *Hoan-ti*, answering to the year B. C. 2637.

One of the most remarkable correspondences, however, between the two systems, which is evinced by the Chinese passage in question, is denied by P. de Mailla; who insists on the reality of the conjunction of the sun, moon, and planets at the time therein stated. I shall here give a brief outline of his argument, as it displays a sample of the unfair expedients which are sometimes resorted to, for the purpose of sustaining the credit of the Chinese records; and besides the examination of it will afford an opportunity of showing, how utterly fallacious is the chronology of the Chinese. The learned Father having found, by the aid of the Tables of De la Hire, that, in the year most favourable to his views within the space of time assigned to the reign of Tchien-hio, new moon did not fall on the first day of spring, but two days after, actually modified his two latter translations of the passage, so as to make them accord with this circumstance. Thus, by the substitution of “*præcesserat*” for “*incepit*,” or some word to that effect, the Latin is made to declare that, on the recorded occasion, the spring began before the day of new moon;—a misrepresentation of the Chinese statement, which is unguardedly exposed in his first translation. For in this extract from the body of his work, where, it seems,

the translator failed for a moment to keep certain objects as fully in view, as he did in his third letter to M. Freret, he has let transpire the true meaning of the part of the original under consideration; namely, that the conjunction of the sun and moon was, not after, but on, the very first day of spring.

That, as far as the point in question is concerned, the first translation is really the correct one, can be proved by reference to the original, as given by P. de Mailla. The character which, in his third translation, he read by the word “*præceserat*,” is exhibited for the reader’s inspection in Plate V. No. 3. This character is easily found in the Chinese dictionaries, as it is the 117th radical or key, without any addition or alteration; it is read by the Chinese word *leih*, and the several meanings of it are given by Dr. Morrison as follows. “Erect; to erect; to establish; to form or fix; to place in order; to arrange; to effect; to perfect or accomplish; *the point of time when any thing takes place*; soon; speedily; the name of a carriage.” Not one of these meanings is fairly represented by the Latin verb “*præcedere*,” and as to the tense in which the translator put this verb, he had no right to choose a different one for it and the others of the sentence, as there is nothing in the context to mark a difference of time between them, nor is there any particle in the original to warrant such a difference, each verb being therein expressed by a single character. But if we take this character in the meaning of it which has a more immediate reference to time, with an ellipsis of the substantive verb, and translate it and the following one, “at that very instant *there was* spring,” we shall find, as strongly marked out as it could possibly be by means of such very vague writing, the synchronism of all the parts of the recorded phenomenon;—namely, the conjunction of the sun, moon, and five planets, exactly as the sun was in the middle of the sign Aquarius, and just as he was emerging from the constellation *Che*. Accordingly P. Gaubil, in alluding to this passage, gives the sense of it as follows, in his Chinese Astronomy, as edited by P. Souciet. “— au moment du *Li-tchun*, les sept planètes se trou-

vèrent toutes réunies à ce point du ciel appelé *Li tchun*, qui est notre 15° de ♒, et la constellation *Che* se trouvoit aussi au *Li-tchun*.”—*Observations &c. publiées par le P. Souciet*, tom. ii. p. 30.

P. de Mailla having thus perverted the meaning of the character in question, makes this very perversion a triumphant ground for the truth of the Chinese record; and urges this point, among others, as follows. “Pour la vérification de ce passage, il faut donc; 1°. que le commencement de cette année ait été près de *Li-tchun*, ou commencement du printemps, que de tout temps on a fixé au 15 de *aquarius*; 2°. que le commencement du printemps ait précédé le commencement de cette année; 3°. que cinq planètes se soient assemblées; 4°. que tout cela soit arrivé après avoir passé la constellation *Che*. Or s’il se trouve une année sous le règne de Tchien-hio, où se vérifient ces quatre points, n’est-il pas évident que cette année est certaine, que la chronologie doit remonter jusque-là, et que Tchien-hio a régné a la Chine?”—*Lettre III. &c.* p. cliii.

But our author deviated still farther from the synchronism which is described in the Chinese passage; and having found that, in the year for which he made his calculations, the commencement of spring fell on the fourth, and the new moon on the sixth of February, chose the ninth of that month for his principal epoch, and represents it as the day of the recorded conjunction of the heavenly bodies. From their number, however, he was obliged to exclude, upon this occasion, the most important of them all, the sun (as having been at the time above thirty-two degrees to the west of the moon), and also Venus, not the least considerable of the planets. After the unwarrantable liberties, then, which he took with the original text, what has he made out, or rather what is all that he even claims to have established? Merely this much, that, on a day arbitrarily selected by him different from both the first day of spring and the time of new moon, four of the planets and the moon were no farther asunder than about twelve degrees in longitude and seven in latitude. And this is called their *conjunction*, by

an author, who was perfectly well acquainted with the astronomical sense of the term !

The following extract from P. de Mailla's letter to M. Freret already referred to, contains his own account of the several results of his calculation, which will be found to bear out the correctness of the foregoing sketch. " — le *Li-tchun*, ou le commencement du printemps est, suivant la pratique, le jour auquel le soleil est au 15 d'*aquarius*; ce *Li-tchun* fut, suivant le style Grégorien, le 4^e. de février de l'année Européenne 2461 avant l'Ere-chrétienne, comme vous pouvez le voir dans le calcul que je vous envoie. Suivant le texte Chinois le *Li-tchun* ou le commencement du printemps, précéda le premier jour de la première lune de cette année Chinoise. Or suivant mon calcul, ce premier jour fut le sixième de février, deux jours après le *Li-tchun*; ce même jour à Pou-tcheou du Chan-tong, ou à Kao-yang de Pao-ting-fou, où l'histoire dit que Tchuen-hio tenoit sa cour, l'une et l'autre ville à-peu-près sous le méridien de Pé-kin, on vit les planètes se joindre au signe des *poissons*. [Here follow the calculations alluded to, which are not worth submitting to the reader; since they do not bear upon the point which the calculator proposed to establish; or rather, as far as they go and are correct,^a they make against it. Immediately after the text proceeds thus] Sur les sept heures et demie du

^a In the calculations given by P. de Mailla, he has made out the longitude of the sun, on the sixth of February of the year B. C. 2461, at three o'clock, P. M., under the meridian of Paris, after all due corrections, to have been $10^s\ 17^{\circ}\ 52'\ 56''$; and that of Venus, at the same time, $7^s\ 15^{\circ}\ 4'\ 23''$. If both these positions were rightly computed, it would follow that the difference between the geocentric longitudes of the two bodies would at that time have been $3^s\ 2^{\circ}\ 48'\ 33''$, that is, more than 92° ; whereas it is well ascertained, that the elongation of Venus from the sun never exceeds 47° . As it is scarcely possible that this fact could have been unknown to the author, the error in one of the above computations cannot be ascribed to ignorance; neither can it be supposed to have been committed by design, as it did not assist him in his argument. The probability, therefore, is, that it was occasioned by mere inadvertence; but, from whatever cause it may have arisen, it shows that implicit reliance cannot be placed in the accuracy of his calculations.

soir et trois jours après, le troisième de la première lune, neuvième de février à la même heure, on vit *la lune, saturne, jupiter, mars, et mercure*, en conjonction dans l'espace de $11^{\circ} 58' 55''$ en longitude sur sept degrés environ en latitude : voilà ce que m'a donné le calcul dont je joins une copie à cette lettre. Enfin, Monsieur, la lune est sortie la dernière de la constellation *Che*, et cela sur la fin du jour du *Li-tchun* à Kao-yang-hien ; le soleil en est déjà éloigné de huit degrés ; tout ce qui est rapporté dans le texte Chinois, arriva passé la constellation *Che*."—*Lettre III. &c.* pp. cliii—clviii.

Enough has been now adduced to show, how very far P. de Mailla, even upon his own representation of the case, was from having made out for the period selected by him, a conjunction of the sun, moon, and five planets in $\approx 15^{\circ}$. But he was just as unsuccessful in the time he assigned to this event ;—a time which is quite at variance with that deducible from the Chinese record. According to the statement of that record, we have seen that the middle point of Aquarius was just outside the constellation *Che* ; whereas at the period fixed on by our author, that is, in the year B. C. 2461, it was eight degrees to the east of this constellation, as is admitted by him near the close of the above extract. From the rate, therefore, of the precession of the equinoxes, which was formerly somewhat slower than at present, it follows, that the date which he pitched upon, in accordance with the present system of Chinese chronology, was 576 years earlier than would answer for the verification of the passage in question. Thus it appears, that he in every respect completely failed to prove the truth of this astronomical statement ;—a statement which, it may, by the way, be added, is admitted into the authorized annals of the Chinese, and is sanctioned by their board of historians, and by all their learned men. But although the conjunction of the heavenly bodies recorded in this document, was only imaginary, yet the period of time connected therewith by the concomitant parts of the account, can be clearly ascertained, and turns out to be near six centuries later than it has been fixed by the Chinese. I do

not put forward this circumstance in direct proof of the fallacious length assigned to Chinese history (I hold that the quantity of the reduction to be made in that length is considerably greater); but it is, I submit, decisively valid as the ground of an *argumentum ad hominem*, against those who attach the slightest credit to the chronology of the Chinese, or suppose that its truth is, in any degree, sustained by their astronomical records.

But to return from this digression;—besides the identity of the principle on which the Indian and Chinese systems of astronomy are founded, there may be noticed, in proof of their connexion, the use of the Metonic cycle in both systems. But, if it has been shown far more likely that the Hindus were taught this cycle by the Greeks, than that they discovered it of themselves, the corresponding conclusion, as to the probability of the Chinese having arrived at it through Indian instruction rather than through their own intellectual efforts, holds with still greater force; because the Chinese have shown much less sagacity than the Hindus in astronomical investigations, and are even yet extremely ignorant and backward in that department of science. The Indian origin of the modes of computation used in Chinese chronology, has already been rendered probable, in as far as it has been shown, that both systems are equally fallacious, and that in both there are epochs employed which take their rise from astronomical phenomena of the same imaginary nature. But the connexion between the two systems will be made still more obvious by comparing their cycles, which agree in particulars that it is scarcely possible for two nations to have pitched upon independently of each other. In both countries the length of the chronological cycle is sixty years; in both, the years of this cycle are designated, not, as one might expect, the first, second, third, and so on according to their order, but by arbitrary and fanciful names, which have no relation whatever to their order; and in both, the number of the cycle itself, that is, of the current cycle, is usually omitted. My authorities for these particulars, as far as the

Chinese chronology is concerned, shall be given farther on; but to show that they hold also in the Indian system, it will be sufficient to quote the following passage from a paper of Mr. Marsden's in the Philosophical Transactions of the year 1790. "As the era of *Bikramajit* [corresponding to the year B. C. 56] prevails chiefly in the higher or northern provinces of India, so does that of *Salaban* [corresponding to the year of our era 78] in the southern, but more exclusively. In their current transactions, however, the inhabitants of the Peninsula employ a mode of computation of a different nature, which, though not unknown in other parts of the world, is confined to these [the southern] people amongst the Hindoos. This is a cycle, or revolving period, of sixty solar years, which has no further correspondence with the eras above mentioned, than that of their years respectively commencing on the same day. Those that constitute the cycle, instead of being numerically counted, are distinguished from each other by appropriate names,^a which, in their epistles, bills, and the like, are inserted as dates, with the months and perhaps the age of the moon annexed; but, in their writings of importance and record, the year of *Salaban* (often called the *Saka* year) is superadded; and this is the more essential, as I do not find it customary to number the cycles by any progressive reckoning."—*Phil. Trans.* vol. lxxx. part ii. pp. 571–2.

The figures used in Chinese arithmetic, with their names and their numeric values, are exhibited in Plate V. No. 4; and some examples of the manner in which they are combined in the expression of numbers are subjoined in No. 5. They are copied, the former from article 307, and the latter from article 308 of M. Abel-Remusat's Grammar. The shape of the characters is different from that of the Indian figures, but the

^a In a note upon this part of the passage, in which Mr. Marsden gives the sixty names in question, he informs us that their "significations relate to the sun, as having a good or evil influence, or to the year, as being more or less lucky."—*Ibidem*, p. 582.

principle of the notation is obviously the same; and that the Chinese system is the derivative one, is evident, not only from the extreme clumsiness of its application,—in the use of superfluous figures, and likewise in the irregularity of their use, as instanced by the expression for 120, compared with that for 124;—but also from the order in which the characters are to be read, which is from left to right, exactly the same as in Sanscrit, but the very reverse of that observed in any other Chinese writing, when ranged in horizontal lines.

In connexion with the arithmetic of the Chinese, their logarithmic tables, though not derived from India, deserve some notice; as they afford an instance of an expedient, forming part of the artful system of contrivances resorted to by this people, for the purpose of stealing imperceptibly into the credit of having made inventions which never originated with them. For the exposure of their attempt in this case we are indebted to a very interesting paper of Mr. Babbage's, in the third volume of the Transactions of the Astronomical Society of London, respecting some errors that are common to many tables of logarithms. These errors the author detected by comparing the principal European editions of logarithms with his own; and traced them to VLACQ's tables, printed at Gouda in 1628, as their source; their propagation through subsequent tables having arisen from the universal practice of copying which prevails in the drawing up of such works. After detailing the particulars of six of those errors, and enumerating the editions in which in common they are to be found, Mr. Babbage proceeds as follows. "As the library of the Royal Society contains a table of logarithms printed in the Chinese character, *which contains no indication or acknowledgment of its being copied from any other work*, I was curious to compare it with European tables in the six cases alluded to. I found, on examination, that precisely the same errors occurred in the Chinese tables, as those which I have noticed as being found in the tables of VLACQ. The conclusion from this fact is irresistible;—the Chinese tables were copied from those of VLACQ. As

these tables are of rare occurrence, a short account of them may not be uninteresting, The copy in the library of the Royal Society was presented to the Society by *Pere Gaubil* in 1750. It consists of two thin volumes; each containing the logarithms of 50,000 numbers; each page contains three columns of natural numbers, and three columns of their corresponding logarithms; each column consisting of fifty lines. The numbers begin at the end of the volume, and the first column is on the right hand side of the page; but, unlike the usual mode of writing the Chinese character, the figures read from left to right. There is no column of differences, nor any running title; *and the volumes are without title-page, preface, or instructions.*—*Memoirs of Astron. Soc. of London*, vol. iii. p. 66.

This description serves to give us some insight into the mode, practised by the Chinese, of preparing the way for their laying claim to the merit of discoveries not really made by them, but which they had learned, and, in general, very imperfectly learned, from strangers. A foreign invention is first communicated to the public, without any notice or acknowledgment of the source from which it was derived; and when its external origin is forgotten, it is then, in the most positive and barefaced manner, asserted to be a production of native talent. In reference to the sequel of this practice, I have further to observe, that—before their historic documents were, through transcription into alphabetic writing, as well known to foreigners as they now are,—the mandarins, there is the strongest reason to believe, as soon as ever a claim of the kind was set up by them in the manner just described, had, with a view to its support, an account of the invention which was the subject of it, surreptitiously introduced into some early part of their annals. Their eagerness to establish thus the priority of discovery in favour of their own nation, leads to the exposure of the artifice to which they have, for such purpose, resorted. For several acquisitions in science and the arts, evincing a degree of skill that could be only the result of a long course of experience and gra-

dual improvement, have been placed by them in ages before such experience could have been obtained, and when, consequently, it is absolutely impossible that its fruits could have been reaped by either the Chinese or any other people.

In illustration of the correctness of this view of the subject, it will be sufficient to refer the reader to the first volume of P. de Mailla's translation of the *Annals of China*, from the forty-fifth to the forty-ninth page;^a where the emperor Yao is represented as ordering his astronomers to determine the exact lengths of the year and of the month, and likewise the period in which, by intercalations, the solar and lunar years, setting out from the same commencement, would also terminate together. Accordingly, these obedient savans (for, it seems, every thing desired could, then, be found out and disclosed, at word of command) ascertain the length of the year to be precisely 365 days and a quarter; and that of the month, such, that nineteen years of twelve months, with seven additional months intercalated, that is, 235 lunations, are equal to nineteen solar years. They, however, not only thus discover the Metonic cycle, but they also

^a It may be worth here remarking in addition, that one of the orders which Yao, in the above-mentioned portion of the Chinese annals, is recorded to have given his astronomers, was to discover the equinoctial and solstitial points of the ecliptic, or the four fixed stars which were, in his time, nearest those points; and that the very manner in which it is stated that those orders were fulfilled, shows clearly that the Chinese historians (and in the board formed from their body are always included the most able of the Chinese astronomers) knew not how the proposed problem was to be worked, and consequently must have learned the results of its solution from foreigners. We are told,—and this account is given in the *Chu-king*, as well as in the general annals of China,—that the four points in question were discovered, by sending four astronomers to observatories placed in four extremities of the empire; the vernal equinox, by one sent to the east; the summer solstice, by a second in the south; the autumnal equinox, by a third in the west; and the winter solstice, by a fourth in the north. Now it is impossible that persons who had themselves discovered those four points in the heavens, could be ignorant of the fact, that their determination was independent of the place of observation, and that all four would come out just the same, in which ever of the selected observatories they were ascertained.

find out, that the lengths of time therein compared with each other, are not exactly equal; and they even determine the quantity of their difference, within less than an hour and an half of the truth. The part of the extract referred to which bears upon this last point, is as follows. “— au bout de dix-neuf ans, après sept intercalations, le soleil et la lune se rapprochent de fort près, et cette révolution s'appelle *tchang*. Cependant, dit le Tsien-pien, il s'en manque encore de quelque chose que le soleil et la lune ne viennent se rejoindre parfaitement au même point; c'est pour cela que, prenant vingt-sept *tchang* pour un *hoei*, trois *hoei* pour un *tong*, et trois *tong* pour un *yuen*, le total, qui fait 4617 ans, est l'époque du retour de la lune au soleil sans reste.”—p. 49. Here it is laid down that the inequality between the years and the lunations of a Metonic cycle amounts, in the course of 243 of those cycles, to exactly one lunation, and consequently is removed by the addition of that lunation. According to this determination the inequality in a single cycle should be the 243rd part of a lunation, or 243rd part of 29 days, 12 hours, 42 minutes, nearly; that is, it should be 2 hours, 55 minutes, nearly; which is just about the double of its real quantity. So near an approach to the true correction it is absolutely impossible that any people, without proper instruments, and without a knowledge of the lunar theory, could have accomplished, till after a course of observations continued for a very long series of years; yet the Chinese would have us believe, that their forefathers succeeded in the investigation, to this extent, almost immediately after the Flood. The period at which all the above-mentioned discoveries are stated to have been made, corresponds to the year B. C. 2356. And not only does this account appear in the authorized annals of China; but the greatest part of it is also found in the copies, at present extant, of the *Chu-king*, a book said to have been written by Confucius above two thousand three hundred years ago, and to which the very highest authority is attached by the Chinese.

Had Lord Napier lived a few centuries earlier than he did, and had his invention reached China three or four hundred years ago, we should now find a chapter in the *Chu-king* describing *Yao*, or *Yu*, or some such fictitious emperor, ordering his astronomers to invent logarithms, and those very able savans inventing them accordingly, in immediate fulfilment of his orders; and still farther we should, no doubt, meet with the celebration of so wonderful an effort of Chinese sagacity in the veracious annals of China. But the mandarins can no longer play these tricks with their historic documents; they have quite sufficient employment on their hands to conceal or defend those they have already played. For any claim, therefore, which they may make to the invention of their logarithmic tables, they must content themselves with the negative proof, of which they have laid the foundation in the contrivance, above described, for burying the foreign origin of those tables in oblivion. Such proof may, perhaps, impose upon a very ignorant and prejudiced population in the Celestial Empire, but it can hardly succeed elsewhere; and, at all events, the Chinese pretensions, under this head, are wholly set at rest in Europe, by the ingenious discovery of Mr. Babbage.

With respect to the tables in question, I have only to add, that the omission in them of the column of differences, shows how very little the use of logarithms is understood by the Chinese; and that even this imperfect knowledge of the subject is extended to but a small proportion of their savans, is evident from the very clumsy application of the Indian principle of numeric notation which still prevails in China. It is impossible but that men who had learned to read even a single line of those tables, must have ever after been aware of the total inutility of expressing numbers by two rows of figures; as the values of those in the principal row, which depend upon their places, are sufficiently indicated by their respective distances from the place of units, without the addition of the second row.

CHAPTER X.

ON TWO VERY IMPORTANT DEFECTS OF CHINESE WRITING.

1. THE CHINESE WRITING NOT EASILY LEARNED—THE NATURE AND EFFECTS OF CHINESE EDUCATION—2. CHINESE WRITING VERY VAGUE AND OBSCURE—THE PRINCIPLES OF GRAMMAR NOT UNDERSTOOD BY THE CHINESE—PECULIARITIES OF STYLE IN CHINESE COMPOSITION—THE CHINESE POETRY NOT OF NATIVE GROWTH—LIMIT HENCE ASSIGNABLE TO THE ANTIQUITY OF CONFUCIUS—THE CHINESE POETRY PARTICULARLY OBSCURE.

IN the present chapter, and some of those which follow, I propose to canvass the soundness of certain opinions respecting the general excellence of Chinese writing, which it is the fashion of the present day to put forward. These opinions relate chiefly to four points; 1. the facility with which this writing can be learned; 2. the clearness and precision with which its meaning is expressed; 3. its value in recording ancient events; 4. its value as an instrument for the conveyance of other kinds of information, and for the general advancement of human knowledge. Before I enter upon the separate examination of these several imputed excellencies, I must observe, that, even if they were all proved actually to belong to the system in question, they would not bear out the inference, which, at the first blush, they have some appearance of favouring, and which, perhaps, there is, among certain persons, a latent wish through them to establish. Undoubtedly if an invention, confessedly human, could be made to answer all the purposes of alphabetic writing, it is extremely improbable that a miracle should ever have been worked to teach man this latter branch of the graphic art. But the Chinese system cannot now be assumed to be purely and exclusively the offspring of human intellect; it has, for ages past,

had infused into it a phonetic use of signs derived from the Sanscrit or Syriac alphabet. And although this infusion has, till a comparatively recent period, been confined to dictionaries and commentaries, yet it is impossible to say how far the benefits of it may not, even before the restriction ceased, have been indirectly extended to the system at large. The more important subject, however, for inquiry is, whether this writing really does possess the above specified excellencies, in the degree in which they are claimed for it; to which subject, therefore, I now beg to draw the reader's attention.

Upon the first point M. Abel-Remusat assures us, in the preface to his grammar, that Chinese (including under this head both writing and speech) can be just as easily learned as any of the Oriental, and even as some of the European languages. "Les obstacles et les préjugés qui se sont opposés jusqu'ici aux progrès de la littérature chinoise en Europe, semblent diminuer de jour en jour; et l'on peut prévoir le moment où les uns se trouvant levés complètement, et les autres tout-à-fait dissipés, l'étude du chinois deviendra aussi facile que celle de toutes les autres langues orientales, peut-être même que celle de certaines langues européennes."—*Pref.* p. v. The astonishment which this announcement is calculated to excite, is somewhat diminished by its being conveyed to us in the form of a prediction rather than of present intelligence; but the author, in a subsequent part of his preface, forsakes the prophetic mode of speaking, and expresses himself to the same, or indeed to still stronger effect, respecting the existing state of the case. "C'est un fait reconnu maintenant par des hommes dont le témoignage est d'un grand poids en ces matières, que l'écriture chinoise, dont l'étude occupoit, disoit-on, les lettrés pendant toute leur vie, peut s'apprendre comme toute autre, et ne demande pas de plus grands efforts d'attention ni de mémoire."—*Pref.* p. xxvii. It is rather curious to observe here, how the Professor improves in confidence, as he proceeds. At first, from excess of modesty, or, perhaps, from some misgiving that his reader might be startled by too sudden a declaration,

he merely predicts that the study of Chinese will soon become as easy as that of any Oriental, and of some European languages. But in a few pages after, when the mind has by degrees been brought to a fitter state for receiving the strange communication, he tells us that this same study was already, at the very time of his writing, really as easy as that of any language whatever. In the latter passage, indeed, he alludes to certain authorities of great weight in favour of his statement, but he has not condescended to specify those authorities, so that we have no means of judging of their true value. He also alludes to the counter-testimony of the early missionaries, which, however, he does not consider entitled to the slightest attention; and, of course, all the accounts which they, in great number, and with great minuteness of circumstantial detail, have transmitted to us concerning the difficulties of the subject, must be quite erroneous.

To this total rejection of the information supplied by the missionaries, there are several who do not assent, even among those who agree generally with the Professor in his excessive admiration of Chinese literature. Even the Abbé Grosier decides in their favour, on the point under consideration. In the Essay he prefixed to his publication of the French translation of the Chinese Annals, on occasion of speaking of the original, he says: “— cette histoire, écrite en une langue la plus difficile et la plus compliquée qui soit dans l’univers —.” *Discours Préliminaire*, p. xxiv. But not only are the foregoing assertions of M. Abel-Remusat at variance with opinions formed in Europe, by men disposed to entertain upon the subject in general views similar to his; but also the earlier accounts from China which he wished to set aside, are, to a considerable extent, confirmed by recent ones of the highest credit. Dr. Morrison, whose knowledge of Chinese cannot be doubted,^a expresses

^a The value of Dr. Morrison’s Anglo-Chinese Dictionary is acknowledged even by M. Abel-Remusat, though apparently with some reluctance. In the text of the preface to which I have already referred, he states that this Dic-

himself, in the preface to his Grammar, upon the question before us, with great moderation, and, I believe, with perfect accordance to the real state of the case, in the following terms. “To know something of the Chinese language is a very easy thing; to know as much of it as will answer many useful and important purposes is not extremely difficult; but to be master of the Chinese language, a point to which the writer has yet to look forward, he considers extremely difficult.” At the time when the author made this declaration—his preface is dated in 1811—he had been four years among the Chinese, the greater part of the time engaged with an astonishing degree of ardour and perseverance in the study of their system, after having previously learned as much as he could of it in England.

Where there is such an accumulation of authorities of various kinds and dates against the Professor, it is hard to conceive what could have induced him to put forward his extraordinary statement. The only reasons I can find urged by him in its support are these two: 1°. It is not necessary for the student to commit to memory more than two thousand characters. There are, indeed, generally in the dictionaries about forty thousand, and half of these, perhaps, or at all events more than a quarter of them, are in common use; but still he that has learned two thousand of them can never be at a loss. “La multitude des caractères semble effrayante; mais elle n’importe en rien, puisque la plupart de ces caractères sont inusités, et que celui qui en connoît deux mille n’est jamais embarrassé.”—

tionary would be the very best that ever was printed, only that it was not yet completed, “—le dictionnaire chinois-anglais du docteur Morrison seroit incomparablement préférable à tout autre, s’il étoit achevé;—” And in a note written after the entire of the second Part had appeared, he still allows it to be the best, adding, however, that it is disfigured by a considerable number of great faults. “Quoique ce beau travail soit déparé par un assez grand nombre de fautes graves, il n’en est pas moins supérieur à tout ce qui a été fait dans le même genre;—” *Pref.* p. xxix. Perhaps some of the grave faults of this work are the facts it communicates, which do not exactly accord with M. Abel-Remusat’s views of the great excellence of Chinese literature.

Pref. p. xxviii.—2°. Two, or, at most, three years' study will be sufficient for a man of zeal and perseverance, to enable him to avail himself of all the rich treasures of Chinese learning:—
“On ne croit plus à présent qu'il faille toute la durée de la vie d'un homme pour apprendre les élémens du chinois; en effet, deux ou trois ans d'études au plus suffiront désormais pour ouvrir à un homme zélé et persévérant, un libre accès à ces richesses variées —.” *Pref.* p. xxxii.

With respect to the first of our author's assertions, I confess, it appears strange to me that the learning one-tenth, or even one-fifth part of the Chinese characters in ordinary use, should be sufficient to give the student a competent knowledge of the system. But even supposing this difficulty surmounted, another yet greater still remains behind. For how can we possibly imagine it to be as easy to get by heart two thousand very complicated signs as twenty-five, or thirty letters of an alphabet? If it be said that the words of the language may be committed to memory at the same time as the characters, the paradox is not thus removed, because the words must be learned at any rate, no matter which set of characters are employed, and the disproportion of two thousand to twenty-five or thirty still lies in our way. Reasoning, however, as I here do, chiefly upon information gained at second hand, I by no means would venture to push the inference from these considerations to its full extent; as I am conscious that there may possibly be circumstances to reduce the above difficulties, which a more intimate acquaintance with the subject might perhaps disclose. But with every abatement on this score that can in fairness be expected, there surely yet remains, with respect to the facility of learning, a prodigious superiority on the side of alphabetic writing; and it must be admitted that the naked fact first referred to, instead of sustaining the Professor's opinion, does itself require the supposition of some unknown favourable concomitants, to justify, even in the lowest degree, the bearing which he would give it. There is, indeed, a circumstance which, to a certain extent, appears at first view to make in favour of his statement, namely,

that great numbers in China besides the learned are able to read and write ; but it should be added, that these numbers do so with a degree of imperfection that renders the acquisition of scarcely any use ; of which imperfection, as far as regards their writing, our author himself affords elsewhere the following very striking instance. “ Les artisans et autres hommes illettrés, à la Chine, prennent à chaque instant les uns pour les autres les caractères qui ont la même prononciation, et les emploient ainsi, abstraction faite de leur sens, à peu près comme on emploie les uns pour les autres, certains mots homonymes dans nos *rébus* ; hereux quand ils ne trouvent pas quelque raison absurde pour justifier l’usage vicieux qu’ils font des caractères.”—*Mémoires de l’Institut, Acad. des Inscript. et Belles-lettres*, tome viii. p. 43.

With respect to the second fact adduced by M. Abel-Remusat, there is a circumstance connected with it, which he appears to have overlooked, but which, notwithstanding, I cannot avoid thinking, ought to be taken into consideration. If I mistake not, he allowed his pupils the advantage of his own grammar, and of other books alphabetically written. But, surely, to make a fair comparison between the degrees of expedition with which the two systems can be learned, each ought to be taught through means supplied by itself alone. Even, then, supposing that, by his mode of instruction, he could convey an adequate knowledge of Chinese in the space of two or three years, or in as short a time as any other language and writing could be learned, it would not at all thence follow, that this system of itself affords as great facilities of acquirement as does an alphabetic one.

The force of the distinction just made will be more clearly seen, by considering what the Chinese student has to go through, in order to become a proficient in writing, and complete his education. The Professor, indeed, despised all testimony which did not exactly coincide with his own opinions, and having come to a very precipitate conclusion on the present subject, he exaggerated the statements of the missionaries to turn them into ridicule, and triumphantly exclaims : “ On ne croit plus à présent qu’il faille toute la durée de la vie d’un homme pour

apprendre les élémens du chinois ;—” Yet those statements, to the extent to which they were really made, are supported by more recent evidence, and are so far from being refuted by the experience of our author, that information which he himself supplies, can be adduced in their favour.

Among the latest accounts of the state of education in China, is a very brief one that Gutzlaff incidentally gives, in the journal of his second voyage along the coast; which is here presented to the reader's notice, because, although it bears rather upon the very little that is learned by the Chinese at school, than on the difficulties they have to encounter in arriving at that little, yet, as far as it goes, it fully verifies the earlier statements. “ All the way we were accompanied by a number of sharp boys, our constant companions in all our excursions. I admired the sound understanding which these children so fully exhibited. What they might become with a different education, I am unable to say ; but I must regret that no better institutions for the cultivation of their minds are established, than mere schools for reading and writing. When they are able to write a legible hand, and to compose a letter, they are dismissed from school. If they intend to become literary graduates they tarry longer, and read the literature and laws of their country ; but, after all, their acquirements are very limited, and general knowledge lies quite beyond their attainments.”—*Journal of Three Voyages, &c.* p. 229.

The following extract from an article in the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana* agrees in substance with the older representations, but it comprises within a moderate space fuller information on the subject, than I have met with in any one of them separately taken. “ The first five or six years are wasted in acquiring nothing more than the pronunciation of the characters ; the next four, in learning to draw, describe, and trace them in the air ; and it is not till the boy is fifteen or sixteen years old that he begins, by the help of a dictionary, to know something about their meaning. The first object of his studies is the *Pě-kya-sing*, or the ‘ names of a hundred families,’ a list of proper names,

which cannot add one idea to the few he has already acquired. The next are (2) the *Ta-tsě*; and (3) *Tsyen-tsě-wě*n, the ‘great letters,’ and ‘collection of a thousand letters,’ an assemblage of short phrases; and then (4) the *San-shi-king*, or ‘verses of three syllables,’ containing moral reflections on historical events. He afterwards proceeds (5) to the *Se-shu*, or ‘Four books’ of Confucius, which are entirely learned by heart;^a and lastly (6) to the *King*, or classical books, the *ne plus ultra* of Chinese learning. The first examinations are held in the presence of a *Chi-hyen*, or Mayor of a third-rate town; and the candidates, usually about twenty years of age, are 500 or 600 in number. Those who succeed, about two-thirds of the whole, are styled *Hyen-ming*. At the second examination, before a *Chi-fú*, 200 candidates are generally successful, and receive the title of *Fú-ming*. They are afterwards, at intervals, examined by mandarins, sent for the purpose from *Pě-king*, and, if approved, receive the title of *Syen-tsaï*, with certain privileges, or *Kyen-song*, a less honourable, but at the same time, a less laborious rank. They then repair every three years to the Capital of the Province, in order to be candidates for the title of *Kyu-jin*; and the year after it has been obtained, they go to *Pě-king*, to enter into competition for the high literary honour of a *Tsin-tsě*. These honours are often purchased, and often dispensed with; though, according to the laws of the

^a These “four books” contain writings of Mencius (*Meng-tsze*) as well as of Confucius (*Kung-foo-tsze*), but are, for the sake of brevity, called here, as they generally are, by the name of their principal author. The necessity under which the Chinese student is placed of learning these books by heart, is attested in almost every account which has been published of China, and is thus stated by a modern French writer, M. Pouthier, on alluding to the two philosophers. “Leurs écrits, réunis par les Chinois sous le titre de *Sse-chôu*, les quatre livres, forment la base de l’enseignement des jeunes gens dans les collèges de l’empire; ce sont les livres les plus révéérés des lettrés chinois, ceux que doit posséder à fond, et même savoir par cœur, tout homme qui se destine à la carrière des lettres et de l’administration.” Some specimens shall, in a subsequent chapter, be given of the miserably absurd and useless stuff of which the Chinese classical books are composed.

empire, no one can be raised to any dignity who has not obtained them. The candidates are examined in separate apartments; and well-drawn, well-chosen, uncommon characters, never introduced twice, are the great criterion of excellence.”—*Encyc. Metrop.* vol. xix. pp. 583-4.

We have here the true grounds on which an estimate may be formed of the comparative difficulties of the Chinese system and an alphabetic one, by having distinctly placed before us the time it takes to learn the former, through its own separate and peculiar means. An alphabetic reader may perhaps be, at first, inclined to think that nine years of childhood and youth are too much to be devoted to the single object of learning the mere elements—the A, B, C, if I may so call them—of the writing under consideration. But surely the Chinese themselves must, from long experience, be the best judges of this point; and if the number and complication of the characters to be committed to memory, be taken into account, together with the absence of that aid which even a syllabary would afford, in recalling the names of them when forgotten, it will be found that the unfortunate learner could scarcely get through his burdensome task in less time. If it be thought strange that the process is not shortened through the help of dictionaries, we should recollect how very imperfect, as Dr. Morrison informs us, those written in China are, in reference to the designation of sounds, and that, before they are available for this purpose to the student, he must have got completely by heart several thousand characters. The part then of the above statement which is most likely to surprise an European, will, when duly considered, be seen to be really in accordance with what might, from the intrinsic nature of the case, be anticipated; and is not at all refuted by the announcement of M. Abel-Remusat, that he could teach the signification, as well as the pronunciation and shape, of about one-twentieth of the Chinese characters in two or three years. The reduction of time is fully accounted for, by the reduced number of characters taught, and by the assistance derived from books which are for the most part alphabetically printed;

an assistance which he was quite right to avail himself of, in giving instruction, but was wrong to leave out of calculation, in drawing the conclusion on this subject which he appears to have been so anxious to impress upon the public mind.

Still farther, the Professor himself indirectly assists in corroborating the part of the statement which has been just examined; as, solely upon the supposition of its correctness, can a fact be accounted for, which he, as well as several other authors, attests; namely, the excessive blundering which is displayed in the writing of persons of ordinary education in China. On first consideration of the matter, one might very naturally be inclined to suppose that an ideographic writer would be more apt to commit mistakes as to the remote, rather than the immediate signification of the characters of his system, that is, as to the sounds attached to them in his language, rather than their meanings; but the account before us explains why the reverse of this is actually the case, among the Chinese whose attainments are of the common standard. In China, it appears that, up to the age of fifteen or sixteen, nothing is learned by the school-boy but to pronounce and draw his graphic signs; and as, in most instances, he leaves school before, or, at any rate, not long after arriving at the above age, he must, for ascertaining the proper meaning of those signs, depend solely or chiefly on his knowledge of the language.^a Hence, as there are, on the average, between thirty and forty characters of quite different meanings for each word of this language, it is easy to see what confusion the great majority of Chinese writers must make, in expressing such of those meanings as are not of very common occurrence; while, at the same time, the wrong symbols they select for the purpose, are connected with the very monosyllables by which the right ones also would be read.

^a It is evident that a Chinese scholar whose education has been carried no farther than this point, must think to himself chiefly in his words; but should he continue at school till he arrives at a superior knowledge of the system, he then finds that the characters afford a far more distinct representation of his ideas, and is thence led to think in those characters.

The curious fact which has been just accounted for, and which is admitted by even the most ardent admirers of Chinese writing, points out, in a very striking manner, how exceedingly faulty and imperfect that writing must be, in the hands of, by far, the greater portion of the people who make use of it. M. Abel-Remusat, indeed, tries to weaken the force of this argument against the general excellence of the system, by representing the abuse in question as prevalent only among those of the very lowest grade of education, “*les artisans et autres hommes illettrés*;” but the cause of it shows that it must have a much wider range, and the effect it produces on the writing, confirms this inference. Among the *variantes*, or different characters of same meaning, are ranked (by an arrangement that is not very accurate) an entire class of such as differ, not only in shape, but also in meaning; which yet, in their several sets, being pronounced nearly in the same way, are employed in mistake for each other, to such a degree that, at length, the substitution has become authorized by custom. But, surely, it is not the blundering of the most ignorant order of writers that is ever recognized as legitimate: before any innovation of the kind in question is sanctioned by the learned, it must have been forced upon them by general use. Here, again, M. Abel-Remusat endeavours to soften down the evil, by describing the characters confounded with each other to be very nearly of the same meaning, and applied only to denoting what is common to their respective significations;^a but the examples he has himself given, certainly do not bear him out, in, at all events, the first part of the attempted palliation. The passage of his Grammar to which I refer is as follows: “* *thoûng*, i. e. *pénétrants*, est le nom qu’on donne aux caractères qui ne sont pas de tout point synonymes, mais que l’usage autorise à prendre l’un pour l’autre,

^a If the Professor was right upon the latter point, the practice he referred to must be a source of continual alteration in the meaning of Chinese characters, in addition to that which springs immediately from the interchange of those characters; for what is common to two different combinations of ideas, may be a new meaning very distinct from either combination.

dans telle acception qui leur est commune, la prononciation ayant du reste quelque analogie. Ainsi * *thsân* (nom d'une constellation) se prend pour * *sân* (trois); * *mǐ* (miel) s'emploie pour * *mǐ* (silence), &c."—*Gram. Chin.* art. 20. The using the symbol for a constellation, instead of that denoting the number three, and the figure for honey instead of that for silence, may not seem to be as gross mistakes as those committed by the mechanics in China, because persons of somewhat better education there have got reconciled to them by use; but as they arise obviously from the same cause, they must be ranked in the same class; and it is plain that writing in which such mistakes are tolerated, must be very inferior, in point of distinctness, to that which is employed in alphabetic compositions.

The prevalence of the practice, just described, of confounding characters, contributes not only to the vagueness and obscurity of Chinese writing, but also to the more serious imperfection of its failing to continue permanently legible and intelligible;^a—a defect to which at any rate, from its ideographic nature, it is essentially subject to a considerable extent. Such writing may indeed be made to answer the purposes of ordinary present communication, in which much precision is not called for, and, in consequence, its inadequacy to supply a durable record of events may be kept concealed from the multitude, particularly in a country like China, where the public is extremely ignorant; but the requisite characters are so numerous, that the associations, which are merely arbitrary, between them and the ideas they are employed to represent, cannot be lasting, and as soon as those associations cease, the meaning of the writing is irrecoverably lost. The Chinese, I admit, have made great exertions to obviate this evil, of which we have a strong instance, in the length of time which they compel their

^a The length of time during which ideographic writing can remain legible, is still more affected by change of shape than by change of meaning in the characters; but as the evil arising from this source of imperfection in the writing in question, is not enhanced by the system of education pursued in China, the consideration of it is deferred to another place.

schoolboys to devote to the sole purpose of cementing the associations in question. But at what a sacrifice is this attempted! nine years of childhood and youth—the part of human life best fitted for acquiring the rudiments of knowledge, on account of the then retentiveness of memory—are given up to the single object of establishing in the thoughts a connexion between certain characters and sounds; and the mind is not merely not improved during this interval, but is cramped and injured in its powers, by being so long confined to a very stupifying occupation. And yet, after all, the desired effect is not produced; and the very means devised for its accomplishment, are eventually found to be among those by which actually it is frustrated. So long a space of time is applied to riveting the bond which unites the characters with words, that the more important link of the association, or that which connects the words with ideas, is in the main neglected. The great majority of the youth of the country leave school, before the period at which the work is commenced of learning the proper significations of the symbols; and, in the case of persons so defectively educated, it is obvious that, although the sounds attached to the characters may be fixed in their minds, yet the meanings associated with those same characters must be liable to constant change. But however absurd and improper the alteration thus produced in the sense of an ideagram may be, yet as soon as it comes into general use, then, in the words of our author, “*l’usage l’autorise*,” and the learned are compelled to follow the crowd in its adoption. This process may, indeed, be observed to take place also among nations having the benefit of alphabetic writing; but it does not among them go forward to near so great an extent, nor, as far as it goes, does it bear with such noxious efficacy against the permanent intelligibility of that writing; as I shall have an opportunity of more particularly showing in the course of next chapter.

In China even the spoken language has at different periods, through the operation of external causes, been somewhat changed; though in its own nature it is, perhaps, of all that are

in use, the one which is least liable to variation, as it consists of so very few words, and those few are all monosyllables. But the written language of the Chinese is now visibly undergoing alteration; and, if that alteration went on at the same rate in former times, it must at present be totally different from what it was not many hundred years ago. That their dictionaries have opposed no effectual barrier to the progress of this change, is evident from several considerations. In the first place, works of this kind are the natural offspring, not of ideagraphic, but of alphabetic writing, and, as we have already seen proved, could not have been imported into China before the middle of the ninth century; nor is it at all likely that the Chinese became so well acquainted with their use, as to be able to employ their own writing in the production of similar works, till some time after. In the second place, it is upon the great mass of persons who can read and write, that innovations in the meaning of written words chiefly depend; but to this mass in China dictionaries are inaccessible, school being left before their use is taught. In the third place, the Chinese dictionaries do of themselves attest the existence of such innovations, and afford very decisive instances of the strength and velocity with which the current of alteration is proceeding; the significations which they exhibit for several of the characters being far more varied and heterogeneous, than those which are annexed to words in any modern alphabetic dictionary. But however inefficient the check supplied by the books in question may have been, yet surely before the process of change was by them, in some degree at least, restrained, it must have gone forward, at all events, as rapidly as it does at present; whence inevitably arises the consequence, that writing which is now understood in China, cannot be of any great antiquity. But the conviction of this truth must be still more forcibly impressed upon the reader's mind, when he takes into account the rate of variation which has occurred in the shape, as well as in the meaning of the Chinese characters;—a point of which some illustration has been given

in a preceding chapter, and which shall be still farther examined in the next one.

The unavailing efforts of the Chinese to remedy the defects of their graphic system, displayed in the length of time they devote to cementing in the youthful mind the association between their characters and words, are still further observable, in the burden they impose upon their students of committing to memory the names of all the more distinguished families in China; which are called *the hundred names*. This task is a great deal more laborious than the title of the list would lead one to suppose, for the sign of 100 is here, as well as in many other instances, not limited to a particular number, but used in an indefinite sense;^a and the pains undergone prove that, if the Chinese have not yet devised effectual means for the preservation of ancient proper names, the failure cannot be attributed to any indifference to improvement on their part. The expedient under consideration certainly strengthens oral tradition, but cannot render it permanent; neither can their dictionaries, as at present written, serve to perpetuate the memory of names, for many of the characters in them are at this moment employed each to denote a variety of sounds; how then can we depend upon any of those characters which are not in common use for other significations besides proper names, expressing the same articulate sounds now as they formerly did? As soon as the Chinese arrive at the use of a syllabary, they will have a comparatively efficient method thenceforward of recording historic names, but they never can recover the countless ones which have been already lost.

The remarks into which I have been led by considering the

^a M. de Guignes has inserted at the end of his Chinese Dictionary a table of 438 characters applied to the designation of proper names; and, with respect to the indefinite meaning with which the Chinese frequently employ their sign for a hundred, M. Abel-Remusat supplies us with the following information: "On emploie aussi certains noms de nombre dans un sens indéfini, pour indiquer la pluralité ou l'universalité . . . par exemple * * *pě kouan*, centum magistratus, i. e. les magistrats."—*Gram. Chin.* art. 78.

course of education in China, bear not only on the first of the points I proposed to discuss, but also, by anticipation, on the second and third: and I shall now conclude them with one which, relating to the fourth, affords a striking proof of the very little value of the information acquired in the progress of this course. For after the student has arrived at the very summit of Chinese learning, and has worked hard for the purpose till probably twenty-five or thirty years of age, what are the subjects in which he is principally examined, in order to the ascertaining of his extraordinary acquirements? Is it in history, or in law, or in morality, or in what is rather pompously called by French admirers of the system, the *haute littérature* of China? Not at all; his proficiency in these, indeed, is tried; but the grand, the decisive inquiry is only about his handwriting; and “well-drawn, well-chosen, uncommon characters, never introduced twice, are the great criterions of excellence.” So that in fact the examination he has to undergo, corresponds, in its most essential part, to that which would be held in this country, for the selection of a writing master or a clerk in a scrivener’s office.

Upon the second point, or the clearness of the meaning of Chinese writing and its exemption from all ambiguity, M. Abel-Remusat, in the essay prefixed to his Grammar, expresses himself as follows: “— la position des mots détermine leur valeur, et cela, d’après des règles si précises et si constantes, qu’il ne règne presque jamais d’incertitude sur le sens; et quoique la langue soit elliptique et souvent figurée, jamais la même phrase ne peut raisonnablement être entendue de deux manières.”— *Pref.* p. xxviii. Yet in describing the *kou wên*, or ancient style (which might, perhaps, with equal propriety, be called the grand style, as it is used not only in the works supposed to be ancient, but also in such of those, acknowledged to be modern, as are composed on any subject of importance),^a he mentions as

^a “ L’étude spéciale des règles du style antique est nécessaire pour l’intelligence des anciens livres classiques appelés *kîng*, des livres de Confucius et

one of the characteristics of this style, that it is *vague*. “ Dans l’antiquité, l’écriture ne servant encore qu’à des usages bornés, on se plaisait à sous-entendre le verbe ou le sujet des propositions, et à laisser aux mots toute leur latitude d’acception ; on marquoit rarement leurs rapports ; on exprimoit ses idées avec le moins de mots possible ; on écrivoit isolément chaque proposition, sans la lier à celles qui la précédoient ou la suivoient. De là résultoit ce style sententieux, vague, concis et morcelé, qu’on remarque dans les anciens monumens,^a et qu’on nomme, à cause de cela, * * *kou wên*, style antique.”—Art. 64. There is a manifest inconsistency between these two passages, in the first of which an excellence is attributed to Chinese writing in general, which, in the second, is denied to the very best kind of that writing,—to that kind which is employed in books that are, by way of preeminence, called *classic*. This is not a solitary

des philosophes de son école, des ouvrages de toute espèce écrits avant l’incendie des livres (l’an 213 avant J. C.), et des livres d’histoire, de géographie, de philosophie et de haute littérature, ainsi que des écrits relatifs à la politique ou à l’administration, lesquels sont composés, même à présent, dans un style imité du *kou wên*.”—*Gram. Chin.* art. 68. We have here explained to us why the unfortunate Chinese student is, in the advanced part of his education, compelled to get by heart a load of useless stuff written in the antique style ; namely, to enable him to imitate that style. With respect to the *kouân-hoá*, which is contrasted with the *kou wên*, M. Abel-Remusat does not translate it the modern style, but “langue des magistrats ou langue mandarinique ;” which, again, is corrected by M. Julien (in a note to a work of his that shall presently be noticed) into “la langue commune, la langue généralement en usage.” The propriety of the correction may be collected even from the description given by M. Abel-Remusat himself of the subjects to which this style is applied, and of which, after adducing a separate specification, he subjoins the following summary : “ — et généralement tout ce que les Chinois comprennent sous la dénomination de * * *siàò-chouë*, petit langage.”—Art. 69.

^a It should be here observed, that the expression, “les anciens monumens,” which is so often used by French writers in reference to China, means only the older books of the Chinese ; it cannot signify—what an English reader might perhaps be apt to suppose—ancient monuments, with legible inscriptions on them of corresponding antiquity ; for there are none such extant in China ;—a point which shall be more particularly considered in the next chapter.

instance of extravagant praises bestowed upon the system in the gross, which are refuted by less inaccurate statements made in detail.

Even of alphabetic compositions few are in strictness entitled to the eulogium in question; but it is with still less propriety, that it can be bestowed upon any ideagraphic works whatever. An example or two may serve to place this point in a clearer light, as far as respects the graphic system of China. The writings of Confucius are, by his countrymen, looked upon as the great standard of excellence and model of perfection. But are there no obscurities here? no disputes, not merely about the connexion of sentences and parts of sentences, but even about the meaning of the separate signs? and that too, in the case of characters upon which the whole scope of the author so much depends, that by the change of their significations quite different views are given of his entire narrative? I have before me the Preliminary Treatise of the General Description of China by the Abbé Grosier, in which he expresses himself as very angry with MM. de Guignes, both father and son, for their calumnies against the truth of Chinese history, and particularly with the son, who, it seems, effected his object chiefly by misrepresenting the meaning of certain ancient characters. Thus from the account given in the *Chou-king* of the origin of *Lo-yang*, in which it is stated to have been built in five days, the latter writer very naturally infers, that, instead of a splendid town, it could have been no more than a village or encampment, and that the story of its palaces, bridges, towers, &c., as also generally of the power and riches of the Chinese at that time, must be rejected as quite incredible.^a His words are quoted

^a A remark to the same effect, but bearing more generally on the mutability of the meaning of Chinese characters, and consequent uncertainty as to the original signification of such of them as are of great antiquity, is made by M. de Guignes in the Introduction to his Chinese Dictionary, in the following passage:—"Une des causes qui ont jeté les Chinois dans de grandes erreurs par rapport à l'état ancien de leur pays, c'est d'avoir donné aux caractères antiques l'acception qu'ils ont eue dans des temps postérieurs. Les caractères

by the Abbé as follows:—"Ensuite, dit M. de Guignes, on traça le plan de la nouvelle ville sur le bord du fleuve *Lo*, et en cinq jours la ville fut achevée. C'est ainsi qu'on rapporte la construction de cette ville, qui n'étoit tout au plus qu'un hameau ou un simple campement: ce qui diminue beaucoup de cette puissance et de cette richesse accordées aux Chinois existans alors. On bâtit, en outre, à *Lo-yang*, des palais, des portes, des ponts et des tours; chose tout-à-fait incroyable, puisqu'on a vu plus haut que la ville fut achevée en cinq jours."—*Discours Preliminaire*, p. xxxvii. These observations are met by our author, by denying the justness of the translation of the passage of the *Chou-king* from which they have been deduced; by asserting that the term therein rendered *achevée* ought rather to have been construed *tracée*; and by calling in M. Klaproth as a witness to the propriety of this correction.

I have not seen the treatise of M. de Guignes upon China, entitled *Voyage à Pékin*, from which the above quotation is stated to have been extracted; and, consequently, I am unable to furnish my readers with his defence of his own reading of the character in dispute; but, as far as I can judge from the nature of the attacks made on it, I would say that, of the two versions, it was that which was less likely to be the wrong one. Not that I object to the minuteness of the narrative in relating (according to the second interpretation) the time it took to plan out a city, said to have been founded about six hundred years before the age in which the author lived;^a this is quite in the

qu'on traduit aujourd'hui par *empereur*, *province*, *ville*, *palais*, ne vouloient dire autrefois que *chef de tribu*, *canton*, *camp*, *maison*: mais ces interprétations simples flattoient peu leur amour-propre."—*Introduction*, p. xxviii. This remark is judicious, as far as it goes, but it might have been carried a great deal farther; for if the works of Confucius were at all near the age attributed to them, the mutability in the meaning of the characters he employed, would render that meaning at present not merely uncertain, but absolutely unknown, and the writing itself totally illegible.

^a In P. de Mailla's translation of the Chinese Annals, this town is said to

usual style of Chinese historians, who pretend to give the dates of very remote events, with as much accuracy as if they had been of recent occurrence. But, surely, if Confucius told how many days the ancients were occupied in laying down the plan of Lo-yang, he would *a fortiori* have mentioned how long they were building it; and then the attackers of M. de Guignes might have said to him, “You are quite mistaken in supposing that the passage to which you refer, describes the time of building the town; it only states that applied to tracing out its plan, for here comes, in another part of the text, the expression for the former time.” They have not adopted this line of argument; and from the importance of the omission, as well as from the weakness of the grounds on which they actually insist, I apprehend, it may be clearly inferred, that they have failed in their joint assault upon their opponent’s version.

M. Grosier combats this version by giving what is, according to his opinion, the correct translation of the original text. “Le *tai-pao* (un des ministres d’état) fit travailler le peuple de Yne pour tracer les différents endroits de la ville, et cinq jours après la ville fut *tracée*. Le lendemain *Tcheou-kong* arriva et examina le plan et les dimensions de la nouvelle ville.”—*Discours Prelim.* p. xxxvii. But surely, as far as concerns the true meaning of the symbol in question, this is merely confronting one assertion by another; nor in reality is more effected by M. Klaproth, for although he puts forward some

have been built in the seventh year of the Emperor Tching-ouang, answering to the year B. C. 1109. The exact time of setting about this work, 2949 years ago, is—with an affectation of minuteness that necessarily subjects the truth of the narrative to great suspicion—told in the following terms: “—Tching-ouang, à la septième année de son regne, le deux de la seconde lune, prit la résolution de quitter Tchi-fong, ancienne cour des princes de Tcheou, pour aller à Fong-tching, et de-là à Lo-yang, où il résolut d’établir sa cour. Tcheou-kang et Chao-kong qui avoient la dignité de *Tai-pao*, furent devant pour disposer toutes choses: ces deux ministres ne partirent cependant de Fong-tching que le trois de la troisième lune pour se rendre à Lo-yang, où ils arriverent le cinq au matin.”—*Histoire Générale de la Chine*, tom. i. p. 318.

show of reasoning on the subject, yet it will be found, on examination, such as is quite inconclusive. Against the interpretation of M. de Guignes he argues, first, by opposing the authority of one dictionary to that of another, which only shows that the character on which he comments, is of very doubtful meaning; and secondly, by informing us, that, in the Imperial translation of the *Chou-king* into the language of the Mantchoo Tartars, this character is rendered by a word which does not denote a camp, but the act of measuring. As, however, these Tartars are the present rulers of the country, they may be just as much disposed as the Chinese, to exaggerate the ancient grandeur of the empire, and just as prejudiced in favour of a meaning which has a direct bearing on the record of that grandeur. But, it is obvious, that prejudice must exert a very powerful influence, in a case where the obscurity of the symbols leaves an open for great latitude of construction, and where, consequently, the determination of the meaning is matter rather of mere arbitrary choice than of judgment.

The terms in which M. Klaproth conveys his first reason, in his letter to the Abbé Grosier, are worth noticing; they are as follows:—"C'est avec justice que vous reprochez à M. de Guignes le fils d'avoir falsifié le *Chou-king*, en faisant dire à Confusius que la ville de Lo-yang fut *bâtie* en cinq jours, tandis que son texte porte seulement que le plan de cette ville fut *tracé* en cinq jours. En dénaturant ainsi ce passage, M. de Guignes voudroit prouver que les anciens Chinois n'avoient pas de villes, et n'habitoient que dans les camps. Le caractère *yng*, qu'il rend par *camp*, signifie originairement *mesurer*, et jamais aucun commentateur n'a soupçonné que, dans ce passage du *Chou-king*, il pût avoir une autre signification. Si la langue chinoise étoit assez familière à M. de Guignes pour lui permettre de compulser les dictionnaires savans, s'il avoit pu, par exemple, chercher le mot *yng* dans le dictionnaire de *Kang-hi*, il auroit vu qu'au temps où le *Chou-king* a été écrit, ce mot ne signifioit encore que *calculer*, *mesurer*, *circon-*

scrire, tracer un plan, et que l'acception de *camp* ne lui a été attribuée, pour la première fois, que dans le *Ssé-ki* de See-ma-tsien, c'est-à-dire, dans un ouvrage du premier siècle avant notre ère."—*Discours Preliminaire*, p. lxxiv.

Upon this passage I shall venture to make two remarks. In the first place, it is here admitted by M. Klaproth, that the meaning of Chinese characters is subject to alteration in the course of time;—an admission which tells very forcibly against the certainty of Chinese history and chronology, so much boasted of by him. For if the significations of these arbitrary marks have changed since the date of the imaginary conflagration of books, surely they must be allowed to have also varied before that period; and then how are we to ascertain the original ones? Oh! by the dictionaries, of course. By what dictionaries? By those which were written before the conflagration, and have been recovered since. How were they recovered? or supposing them recovered, how could they now be read? To neither of these interrogatories, I suspect, could the extollers of Chinese literature find it very easy to give a satisfactory answer; but perhaps the reader may be able to form a tolerably probable conjecture as to the nature of the asserted *recoveries* or *discoveries*, when he comes to consider the occupations of the Board of History in China; of which some account will be given in the course of next chapter.

In the second place, M. Klaproth, in the above passage, very plainly intimates that there are Chinese books which could not be read or understood by M. de Guignes the younger; that is, not read or understood by a person who spent several years in the country, who was educated by a father acknowledged to be highly skilled in Chinese, and who, besides, was himself the author, or at least the improver and editor, of a dictionary in this language. Verily, this is not kind treatment of his friends by M. Klaproth. He is one of the most extravagant of the party in his general praises of Chinese perfections; and yet, when we descend to particulars, he is found to desert the con-

federates upon two very essential points.^a From the evidence just noticed as incidentally given by him, it appears that, neither is the graphic system of the Chinese easily and quickly mastered, nor are all the works it includes,—particularly those connected with ancient history,—free from obscurities, and easily understood.

But M. Stanislas Julien, who is, I believe, the present Professor of Chinese in Paris, bears still harder on the assertion of his predecessor M. Abel-Remusat, as to the perfectly clear and unambiguous nature of Chinese writings. There is a series of books upon oriental literature which are in succession coming out, very beautifully executed, under the patronage of the Oriental Translation Fund Committee and of the Royal Asiatic Society of London. From one of these I extracted M. Klaproth's description of the Corean alphabet, which has been laid before the reader in a preceding chapter; and I now refer to another volume of the same series, printed in Paris, and published in London in the year 1835: it is a translation by M. Julien of a Chinese work on the doctrines of the sect of the *Tao-Ssé*, the title of which he has rendered *Le livre des Récompenses et des Peines*. The original consists of a text and commentary; of which the former is by much the shorter, and is given by the translator broken up into detached sentences, which are, in the Chinese character, prefixed to the several articles respectively connected with them; but when the whole of it is printed separately, it occupies, as he informs us, only six pages of a volume in 18°; while the commentary extends to so great a length as to include 400 anecdotes and stories. Now M. Abel-Remusat also published a translation of the text, and

^a I am sorry to be obliged to apply these observations to M. Klaproth. Upon the graphic system of the ancient Egyptians I have found him a fair reasoner, though not always a judicious one; and, therefore, I am inclined to attribute his misrepresentations of Chinese literature, not to any deliberate intention of deceiving the public, but to a party zeal which carried him, on this subject, beyond the bounds of discretion, and, indeed,—I should hope without his being himself aware of the fact,—beyond the bounds of truth.

sixteen out of the 400 stories in the commentary, from the very same edition of the original;^a and within the short compass of the portion which is, in common, translated by both writers, there are above one hundred and fifty instances, more or less important, in which they differ from each other. The following is M. Julien's statement on the subject, in the *Advertisment* which he has prefixed to his work. "Dans l'édition que j'ai suivie, les six pages in -18 du *Livre des Récompenses et des Peines* sont divisées en deux cent douze paragraphes. Les lecteurs ne remarqueront pas sans surprise que, dans ces six pages et dans les seize histoires, il y a plus de cent cinquante passages que j'ai cru devoir traduire d'une manière fort différente de celle que M. Abel-Rémusat a adoptée; il en est même un certain nombre où ma version est si opposée à la sienne, qu'on serait tenté de croire qu'il avait sous les yeux un texte et un commentaire tout autres que les miens."—*Avertissement*, p. xiv. M. Julien has not confined himself to mere assertion, as to the extreme difference which exists between the two translations; but has given, in an appendix, a list of sentences from that of M. Abel-Remusat, with numeric references to the corresponding ones in his own work, by comparing which it may be seen that he is fully borne out in the above statement. The list in question, with only the addition of a few very short notes, occupies eleven pages of large octavo size.

As the text and commentary of the original are differently composed, the former in the ancient or grand style, and the latter in that of the language in ordinary familiar use, the discrepancies detailed by M. Julien, which extend to the translations of both parts of the work, and, consequently, affect both

^a M. Rémusat a joint à son travail quelques notes explicatives et seize anecdotes, empruntées à une édition rare qui m'appartient depuis peu, et qu'il a eue pendant quinze ans à sa disposition. Cette édition, qui se compose de trois cents pages in -8°, m'a paru la meilleure que je connusse, et les secours nombreux qu'elle offre pour l'intelligence du texte, m'ont décidé à en donner une traduction complète.—*Avertissement*, pp. iii. iv.

kinds of composition, serve to prove that neither kind is entitled to that credit, for clearness of expression, which has been claimed for Chinese writing in general. I subjoin some passages from the two translations, placing in immediate juxta-position, those which are intended to express the meaning of the same portions of the original. However the compared passages may otherwise differ, their general tenor sufficiently shows, whether they are to be referred to the apothegms of the text or the stories of the commentary. The first story is the only one the entire of which is inserted in the appendix, the remaining extracts from M. Abel-Remusat's translation being limited to the sentences of which M. Julien disapproves; but when the story is short, I give the whole of it from the latter writer's version, in order to show the nature of the information conveyed, as well as the discordance between the two versions. The reader is requested to bear in mind, that no part of this discordance can be accounted for, by the supposition of the translators having had before them copies of the Chinese work belonging to different editions.

BY M. JULIEN.

Il y avait autrefois, sous la dynastie des Song, un homme de la province du Ssé-tchouen, de la ville de O-meï-hien, dont le nom était Wang, et dont le surnom était Siang. Ayant ouvert son cœur au bien, il eut l'intention de mettre en pratique quelques dizaines des préceptes renfermés dans ce livre. Mais un jour, il fut saisi d'un accès de chagrin, et mourut subitement. Il

BY M. ABEL-REMUSAT.

Autrefois, sous la dynastie des Soung, il y avait dans la ville de O-meï-hian, de la province de Ssé-tchhouan, un homme dont le nom de famille était Wang, et le nom personnel Siang. *Il avait toujours eu le projet de faire un traité de religion ; mais différentes occupations l'en avaient empêché.* Un jour, il fut saisi d'un mal inattendu, et il expira subitement. *On était sur le point*

se sentit emporté au milieu des airs, et, de là, il entendit retentir dans sa maison les pleurs et les plaintes de ses enfans. Peu d'instans après, il entendit encore des hommes qui disaient : " Wang-siang avait eu tout à l'heure l'intention de mettre en pratique le Livre des Récompenses et des Peines ; il est juste de le renvoyer promptement sur la terre." Wang-siang revint à la vie, et vécut encore jusqu'à cent deux ans. —p. 2.

Qui lui dit : " Vous obtiendrez, au concours, un rang proportionné à celui de la planche que vous avez gravée." —p. 5.

Avancez dans la bonne voie, et reculez devant la mauvaise voie.—p. 32.

de l'enterrer,^a et sa maison retentissait des cris et des pleurs de ses enfans, quand tout à coup on entendit la voix d'un homme qui disait :

" *Wang-siang* avait conçu le projet d'un livre sur les *Récompenses et les Peines*. Il faut qu'un dessein si utile soit mis à exécution. Qu'on le laisse aller, et qu'il soit rendu à la vie." A l'instant même, il fut ressuscité ; il vécut depuis jusqu'à cent deux ans.^b

Qui lui dit : " *J'ai vu (tchao) ce que tu as fait ce matin.*"^c

Suivre la raison, c'est avancer ; s'en écarter, c'est reculer.

^a Note of M. Julien : " Il y a en chinois *tsai-k'ong-tchong*, étant au milieu des airs (*Dictionnaire de Basile*, No. 7275)."

^b M. Remusat infers from his translation of the first anecdote, that Wang-siang was the name of the author of *the Book of Rewards and Punishments* : " Quoique l'auteur chinois n'ajoute rien sur la composition du livre des Récompenses et des Peines, le sens ne permet pas de douter que Wang-siang n'en soit effectivement l'auteur." It is evident that no such inference follows from the other translation.

^c Note of M. Julien : " Il y a en chinois : *tchao-ni-so-khe-ti-pan-tchong-liao*. Littéralement : Conformément (tchao) à la planche qui vous avez gravée, vous obtiendrez. (*Basile*, Nos. 5489-141-3211-789-6488-4120-26-62). Cf. Morrison, *Dict. Chin.* Part II. No. 350, ligne 8 : *Tchao*, Like, according to, the same as."

Quelques jours après, en parcourant la liste des étudiants qui avaient réussi au concours de la province de Nan-king, il vit que Tchang-tchi-ting^a avait obtenu comme lui le grade de licencié.—p. 53.

Yang-pao, qui vivait sous la dynastie des Han, sauva la vie à un petit oiseau jaune, qui lui apporta dans son bec une paire de bracelets de jade, pour lui témoigner sa reconnaissance. Pendant quatre générations, ses fils et ses petits-fils furent élevés à la dignité de San-kong.^b—p. 54.

S'il a fait cent bonnesœuvres, le dieu Tong-hoa inscrira son nom.^c—p. 134.

Regarder la méchanceté comme une preuve de talent.—p. 138.

Quelques jours après pourtant, *le gouverneur de Nan-king l'examina et lui donna de gros appointemens. Tchang eut aussi de l'avancement.*

lui apporta dans son bec une *pierre précieuse d'une beauté parfaite. Bien plus, un de ses descendants à la quatrième génération devint troisième Koung.*

S'il en a cent, *la fleur d'orient (le soleil) transportera son nom et sa gloire dans les contrées lointaines.*

Etre puissant et habile pour le mal.

^a We have here an example not only of the difficulty in the general construction of Chinese sentences, but also of that which embarrasses the reader in the determination of proper names; M. Julien understanding three characters of the original sentence, and M. Remusat only one of the three, as employed in the designation of a name.

^b Here again we have an example of the difficulty connected with the determination of Chinese names or titles; one of the translators taking the character which is read San, for a numeric expression, and the other supposing it part of a title.

^c Here again the difficulty of ascertaining when characters are intended to denote proper names, is strongly illustrated.

Boucher les trous des insectes, détruire les nids des oiseaux.—p. 235.

Acheter des louanges mensongères.—p. 289.

Entrer follement dans la société des méchants.—p. 379.

Diffamer les autres, et se dire un homme droit et sincère.—p. 394.

Employer toute sa puissance pour venir à bout de ses desseins.—p. 415.

La tortue et le serpent répondent à la constellation du nord, qu'on appelle Hiouen-wou.^a Lieou-yen-hoeï échappa au naufrage pour avoir mis une tortue en liberté. Un homme appelé Sun-tchin-jin, acquit la science des dieux pour avoir sauvé un serpent. Dans tous les temps, ceux qui ont sauvé la vie à des tortues ou à des serpents, ont obtenu des récompenses extraordinaires. On voit par là que ces deux animaux sont doués d'une puissance divine.—pp. 500-1.

Boucher les ouvertures où les oiseaux vont nicher.

Dans le commerce, exagérer le mérite de ce qu'on veut vendre.

Porter le mensonge jusque dans la société de ses amis.

Corrompre la droiture.

Entreprendre au-delà de ses moyens.

Les tortues et les serpents sont sous l'influence directe du pôle septentrional et du dieu de la guerre.

Enough in the way of illustration, I should think, has now been advanced against the correctness of M. Remusat's assertion,

^a Here again the difficulty of proper names is observable.

that *never* does the same Chinese sentence reasonably admit of two interpretations; *never* is there reasonable room for difference of opinion as to the meaning of any Chinese phrase. To place such an assertion in its true light, more direct reasoning does not appear to be necessary; and, were my object merely to refute the Professor, I should stop at this point. But the subject is in itself entitled to some farther consideration; and the view I have given of it will be found strengthened, by an exposure of the gross ignorance of grammar under which the Chinese labour, and which unavoidably has a most injurious effect upon their style. Of this ignorance I now proceed to lay proofs before the reader, premising the following general remark; namely, that the principles of the art in question cannot be understood by any people who are unacquainted with alphabetic writing. It is true that, wherever there is speech, there must be materials for grammar; but the power of analyzing and comparing these materials, is had only through permanent signs which do not represent them in the lump, but bring under our notice their several component parts. Where men have symbols only for entire words, and not for their separate elements, they are no more led by such symbols to consider the nature and composition of words, than if they had no writing whatever. It may, perhaps, be thought that, as the plan of education in China occasions a close connexion, in the imagination of the students, between their characters and words, the one set of signs of ideas may serve to point out the properties of the other set, in this particular kind of writing, though it would not, in ideographic systems in general. But, surely, no symbols and words can be more closely associated in the minds of the Chinese, than numeric figures and terms are among us, or celestial signs and names of constellations are among astronomers; and yet, if we had no way of writing the numbers 7 and 8, for instance, but by means of these two figures, our attention would never be directed to the properties of the words by which 7 and 8 are read in our language; it never would be thus indicated to us, that the word for the former figure is dissyllabic, while that for

the latter is a monosyllable. Or suppose that an astronomer, though perfectly familiar with the characters π , ϖ , Ω , ϖ , and with the spoken names of the constellations they represent, was unacquainted with their alphabetic designations (Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Libra), those ideagrams would afford him no assistance in examining the nature of the corresponding names, considered as mere words; they would never, for example, lead him to perceive, that the first name was in the plural, and the rest in the singular number, or that the three first were masculine, and the fourth in the feminine gender. The Chinese, therefore, as well as every other nation confined to ideagraphic writing, are, in respect to grammar, upon the same footing as illiterate people among us; and when we find that persons here who can neither read nor write, are able accurately to digest the forms of expression in their language, and reduce them to general rules, we may then give credit for the like ability to the men of learning in China.

Of the necessity we are under of using alphabetic writing as means to the discovery of the principles of grammar, the Greeks appear to have been aware, from the name they gave this latter art;—a name in its origin signifying the art of (*γραμματα*) letters, and consequently implying that there could be no knowledge of it without the aid of such characters. But my remark is still more strongly supported by the Chinese themselves, who in their graphic practice afford, as will presently be seen, a very striking illustration of its truth. In their spoken language, indeed,—in which may be observed such a multiplicity of meanings for each term, and no inflexions of the words, or distinctions of forms for the different parts of speech;—while there is scarcely room for any violation of grammar, or opportunity for showing an ignorance of its principles, no degree, at the same time, of skill in it could rescue them from great obscurity of expression. But in their writing, a knowledge of the art might be very useful, and here it is that they betray the absence of this knowledge. I do not assert that they are now totally ignorant of the subject; they may very possibly

have derived some obscure and imperfect notions respecting it, from their intercourse with alphabetic writers. Neither do I take upon me to say positively, that they have not yet got among them any grammatic treatises; they have, without acknowledging it, borrowed a great deal from other nations, and in many subjects they affect the appearance of a degree of knowledge quite superior to that which they really possess. Accordingly, if any treatise of theirs of the kind in question could be produced, I have little doubt but that very marked symptoms might be detected in it of ignorance of the subject of which it professed to treat. My belief, however, is, that they have not yet composed any such treatise, and if I could establish this fact, it would serve very powerfully to corroborate the truth of the general remark now under discussion. The difficulty, indeed, of proving a negative is, in general, very great; but still, in the particular instance before us, I can produce evidence to this effect, which, as far as it goes, is highly respectable. Dr. Marshman, a man of considerable research and extensive acquaintance with Chinese literature, thus expresses himself on the point, in the preface to his *Clavis Sinica*:—"The Chinese have in reality no ideas of grammar corresponding with ours; and while the Sungskrit language abounds with grammatical works, the author has not been able to obtain the least idea of any treatise of this nature in the Chinese language."—Pref. p. vi. And in the body of this work he farther states, that "It has indeed been affirmed by some, that the Chinese have treatises on the grammar of their language; and this may be the case, but the writer has never seen any thing of the kind, nor has he met with a hint in the preface to the Imperial Dictionary, alluding to any work of this nature; which leads him to suspect, either that no such works exist, or that they are held in little estimation; as any respectable work on Chinese grammar could not have been unknown to the compilers of that dictionary; nor, if known to them, is it probable that they would have passed it over in silence."—p. 186. The consideration urged near the end of this latter extract, appears to go a

great way towards substantiating the fact in question ; and certainly carries the proof of it far beyond the state of depending solely on the immediate and personal information of Doctor Marshman.

In opposition to the principle for which I have been here contending, it will perhaps be urged, that in Egyptian legends there have been detected distinctions in the use of hieroglyphs, which, though not, strictly speaking, grammatical, as not being applied immediately to words, but to ideas, have yet a close analogy to grammatical forms, and probably were thence derived. Such, for instance, are the curious selections of subordinate signs annexed to leading hieroglyphs, in order to distinguish actions from the agents or objects of action ; to point out, whether a symbol is to be understood to express one, two, or more individual subjects of a common class, or in case it denotes an action, whether that action has been performed by one, two, or more agents ; and so on. Now, I readily admit that, in the human mind, methodical classifications of words naturally precede those of thoughts, as being much more easily made ; and, consequently, that in all probability the above-mentioned distinctions found in the hieroglyphic writing of the Egyptians, were posterior to, and grew out of their attainment of some knowledge of the principles of grammar. If, therefore, it could be shown that any of their records in which such distinctions occur, were insculped before the reign of Psammetichus, when their intercourse with alphabetic writers commenced, this fact would be nearly subversive of my position. But here it is that the objection entirely fails ; for the names of all the sovereigns of Egypt who preceded Psammetichus, as well as of a few of those who followed him, are ideagraphically written ; and, consequently, cannot now be identified on the monuments of that country. There is no certain way, therefore, of determining an Egyptian legend to have been insculped before the epoch I have just specified ; and the only probable indication of greater antiquity is an extreme simplicity of style and a paucity of signs, excluding all of a mere subsidiary nature ;

while, on the other hand, the appearance in any such legend of the distinctions in question would afford a very strong presumption of its being of later origin. Indeed, next to the circumstance of a hieroglyphic document containing names phonetically written, the surest criterion of its belonging to an age subsequent to that of Psammetichus is, I maintain, its exhibition of those very distinctions.

Leaving, however, ground on which all may not be disposed to agree with me, I shall venture to offer in favour of the principle under consideration, two remarks, against which, as far as I can anticipate, no objection is likely to be made. In the first place, there may be observed even in the very best hieroglyphic writing that has reached our times, such an unskilfulness in the employment of the distinctive signs in question, as is very compatible with the supposition of the Egyptians having derived them from imperfect observation of a foreign system, but is hardly so, with that of their having arrived at them by their own powers of invention. Thus, for instance, in the twelfth and fourteenth lines of the hieroglyphic part of the Rosetta inscription there occurs a combination of characters signifying "throughout all Egypt," which, according to its exact meaning, should be read, "the throughouts of Egypt." The expression is intelligible enough; but surely any writer acquainted with the correct use of a sign for the plural number, would have introduced here some symbol to which it might be properly applied, instead of connecting it immediately with a subsidiary mark corresponding to a preposition; and would have written, instead of "the throughouts of Egypt," some combination to the purport of "throughout the several parts of Egypt." In the second place, no signs corresponding in their use to grammatic ones, are ever to be found in such hieroglyphic documents as are, on all sides, admitted to be of great age, and consequently older than the commencement of alphabetic writing among the Egyptians. For instance, there are none in the very ancient inscription described by Clemens Alexandrinus, and alluded to more than once in the first Part of this work, namely,

that consisting of “a boy, an old man, a hawk, a fish, and a crocodile,” and intended to convey the following meaning: “Oh, Young and Old, God hates impudence.” No argument, therefore, against the position that grammatic knowledge is attainable solely through the aid of alphabetic writing, can be deduced from the hieroglyphic records of the Egyptians; but on the contrary they supply some reasons in its support.

The ground on which M. Abel-Remusat rested his fanciful notion of the prevalence of very great clearness and distinctness of expression in Chinese composition, is, as we have already seen, that the position of the characters determines their grammatical construction, by rules so precise and constant, as scarcely ever to leave room for any uncertainty as to the meaning of a passage. These rules are detailed by him chiefly in the following extracts from his grammar. “Quand deux noms sont en construction, le terme antécédent se place après le terme conséquent; [ainsi l'on dit] * * *mîn li*, populi vis, i. e. force du peuple.^a art : 79.—La règle précédent s'applique aussi à tous les noms composés; ainsi l'on dit, * * *thiân tseù*, cœli filius, i. e. le fils du ciel (*pour* l'empereur). art : 80.—Les adjectifs sont soumis à la règle de noms attributifs, et se placent presque toujours avant le substantif auquel ils se rapportent. art : 95.—Le [pronom] possessif se forme d'après la règle des noms attributifs, en mettant le pronom personnel avant le substantif. art : 139.—Le substantif, sujet d'un verbe quelconque, ou complément d'un verbe actif, ne prend aucune marque particulière. Le premier se place avant, et le second après le verbe, [ainsi l'on dit] * *wang* (rex) * *háo* (amat) * *chén* (virtutem), i. e. ‘le roi aime

^a It may be observed, that grammatic denominations are here applied to Chinese characters as well as to words, and that they are spoken of, as if they were, like alphabetic groups, the immediate representations of words;—a mode of expression which is not strictly correct in respect to ideagrams in general, but is justifiable with regard to this particular species, on account of the very close connexion which the Chinese have established between their characters and words, each character being made to correspond—in its totality, though not in the composition of its parts—with a word, and being committed to memory along with that word.

la vertu.' art : 83.—Dans les verbes à double rapport, le complément direct se place après le verbe, et est suivi du complément indirect ; [ainsi] * * *thiân-tseù* (cœli filius) * *nêng* (potest) * *tsián* (designare) * *jín* (virum) * *iú* (ad) * *thiân* (cœlum). i. e. 'Le fils du ciel (l'empereur) peut présenter au ciel un homme (pour lui succéder).'^a *Meng-tseu*. art. 158.—Quand plusieurs propositions sont dans la dépendance l'une de l'autre, celle dont le verbe est au positif se place ordinairement la dernière, et celle où est la conjonction se met avant. art. 166.—Comme les adjectifs et les autres noms attributifs se placent ordinairement avant le sujet auquel ils tiennent lieu de qualificatifs, de même les adverbes et les expressions simples ou composées, modificatives ou circonstanciellles, ont coutume de précéder le verbe dont ils spécifient l'action. Cette observation fait voir comment des substantifs ou des verbes peuvent être pris adverbialement, d'après la place qu'ils occupent dans une phrase, et sans qu'il soit besoin d'aucun signe particulier." art : 177.

The substance of the above passages is, I apprehend, included in the following summary.—Although in Chinese composition the principal terms of each sentence, that is, the subject, the verb, and (when that verb is active) the object of the action, are mostly arranged according to the order of governance or regimen, the governed word being placed after that by which it is governed ; yet, in the subordinate parts of the same sentence, this arrangement is inverted, and the qualifications of the subject, verb, and object, generally precede the terms on which they respectively depend.—The inversion here specified M.

^a In all his examples M. Abel-Remusat gives after the Chinese characters the corresponding Chinese terms alphabetically written, then the translation of these, word for word, in Latin, and then a paraphrase of the whole sentence in French. The choice of Latin to convey the meaning as clearly as it could possibly be done in the same number of terms, is very judicious ; though even with this auxiliary he cannot be said, when the sentence is of any great length, to have rendered it very explicit. But whatever vagueness or obscurity is found in the translation, must be far greater in the original, from the want of inflexions in the latter language, and the essential aid they contribute to the distinctness of the former.

Abel-Remusat considered very curious, and remarked that it holds also in all the Tartar languages. “— on s’aperçoit que l’ordre des idées est presque toujours inversif en chinois, comme dans les langues tartares.”—*Note to Art.* 167. And in his treatise on the Tartar languages, referred to in this note, he observes, “Mais un trait commun à tous les dialectes turks, sans en excepter le turk oriental, c’est l’inversion perpétuelle, si contraire à nos habitudes, il semble même qu’on peut dire, si contraire à la nature. Ici, comme en mandchou et en mongol, le mot qui régit se place toujours après celui qui est régi ;—” p. 279. It is odd enough that he should have thought it necessary to go as far as Tartary, for an illustration of the arrangement of words which appeared to him so unnatural, and not have perceived that the very same arrangement holds in the language of his next door neighbours, the English people. Thus, for instance, in the following sentence—a good man’s word, in the public estimation, greatly outweighs a bad man’s oath—the order of the words is such as is by no means unusual in English; and it agrees, in every particular, with the description above given of that which prevails in the language of the Chinese.

But what is still more strange is, that M. Abel-Remusat should have claimed the credit of having discovered the fact, that the meaning and grammatical bearing of the several parts of a Chinese sentence depend on their position; although this fact is noticed both in the *Clavis Sinica* of Dr. Marshman and in the *Chinese Grammar* of Dr. Morrison,—works to which our author acknowledged that he had access, at the very time that he was making the extraordinary claim in question, and which he has freely criticized in the very same essay. Dr. Marshman introduces the rules which he has laid down at some length on the subject, by remarking that: “— in a language wherein every termination is supplied by *position*, there must exist an *arrangement* of the characters, essential to the perspicuity, if not to the excellence of any composition. This arrangement is neither more nor less than Chinese syntax,

which it is our business to unfold, as far as we are able to ascertain its existence in their standard works.”—*Clavis Sinica*, p. 499. Dr. Morrison does not appear to have paid as much attention to the matter, but still he has said quite enough for my present purpose, and I prefer giving extracts from his treatise, as they will occupy less space. They are as follow:—“A few remarks on the right order of words in a sentence, is all that can be included in the syntax of a grammar of the Chinese language. 1. A noun in the nominative case follows that connected with it in the possessive; as, ‘This man’s son.’ 2. After the name of office follows the person’s name filling that office 3. The time of an action precedes the verb expressing that action 4. In dates, the year precedes the month; and the month, the day 5. Adjectives generally precede the noun 6. When a particular emphasis is laid on the adjective, it follows the noun 7. The adjective is sometimes separated from the noun by the verb coming between; as, * *Tá* (greatly) * *yeù* (has) * * *kwān-hé* (consequences), i. e. ‘It has important consequences.’^a 8. * *Voô* [a negative particle] at the beginning of a sentence, is understood to apply to every succeeding member, unless there be some turn in the expression 9. Two negatives make a strong affirmative.”^b—pp. 268–272. After perusing these extracts the reader must, I apprehend, be rather surprised at the following announcement of M. Abel-Remusat: “Ce qui ne pouvoit être emprunté de personne, parce que personne encore n’avoit examiné la langue

^a Dr. Morrison appears to have stated this rule not quite accurately, in consequence, probably, of looking to his own paraphrase of the example rather than to the example itself; for the Chinese, according to its literal translation, affords an instance, not of the adjective separated from its substantive, but of the adverb preceding the verb, and of the noun in the objective case following it.

^b The last two rules, though not having an immediate reference to the subject of arrangement, are subjoined to the others I have taken from Dr. Morrison, on account of the very close analogy of which they afford instances, the former between the Chinese and Hebrew, and the latter between the Chinese and English modes of expression.

chinoise sous ce point de vue, ce sont les règles de la construction chinoise, et les observations qui ont pour objet de faire sortir de la position respective des mots et des phrases, la notion précise de leurs rapports, et de la manière dont ils concourent au sens général. C'est une lecture assidue des meilleurs livres, entreprise depuis long-temps, et continuée pendant plusieurs années, qui a permis d'atteindre ce résultat. On ose dire que, par-là, la grammaire chinoise est mise en un jour tout-à-fait nouveau, et tout autrement satisfaisant."—*Pref. de la Gram. Chin.*, p. xx.

But the Professor was, I fear, inaccurate, not only in the appropriation which he endeavoured to make of the discovery in question, but also in the value which he attached to it. No small part of the obscurity in Chinese writings arises from the frequent omission of signs for connecting particles; but the rules of *position* can only determine the grammatic force of the words which are represented, not supply those for which no characters have been given. Besides these rules are by no means so fixed and uniform in their application,—“si précises et si constantes,”—as our author, in his introductory description of them, asserts. Even in the determination of the principal elements of a sentence, they are liable to exceptions. Thus one of the surest criterions of a word being used as a verb, is its being preceded by an expression for an agent. “But (as Dr. Marshman informs us) while a character's having an agent renders it a verb, it must be acknowledged that, in the standard works of the Chinese, the agent is often omitted.”—*Clavis Sinica*, p. 532. Again, a word is known to express the object of action, by its following the expression of the action itself; so that a character which usually denotes a verb, is changed into the sign of a noun, when it comes after that which is appropriated to the verb of a sentence. But we have it, on the same authority as before, that “It (the object), however, does not always follow the verb; it occasionally precedes it.”—*Clavis Sinica*, p. 534. But what is still worse, is that, even if all the rules of position were constantly and without exception observed,

they would yet leave this writing subject to great obscurity, on account of the large proportion of Chinese symbols which are not restricted, in the words corresponding to their signification, to any particular grammatical part of speech. For supposing a sentence to be formed of four such terms, the above rules will not determine whether the second or third is to be taken as the verb; and by varying the choice a great difference of meaning might be produced. But if the passage should consist of more than four symbols of the kind in question, it is evident that the uncertainty as to its correct sense, would be still further increased.

A considerable part of the obscurity which has been just described, might be avoided by distinguishing between characters as applied to verbs and other parts of speech; and unquestionably, if the Chinese had any general conception of this distinction, they would contrive some way or other of pointing it out.^a For though men may, on particular occasions, be designedly obscure, yet, generally speaking, all naturally wish to express their thoughts with as much clearness as they possibly can; and the Chinese more than any other people require for such purpose the above distinction in their writing, because they are in a great measure destitute of it in their language. When the Egyptian, by coming under the dominion of Greek conquerors, had forced upon him such a knowledge of alphabetic writing as brought with it some notion of grammatic distinctions, he marked the symbols that were to be read as verbs, by

^a I grant that the Chinese characters which may be associated with terms of different grammatic powers, are sometimes restricted to verbs, by having joined with them, in the same passage, such other characters as are read either by adverbs, or words that serve the purpose of auxiliary verbs; frequently, however, they are employed to express actions without any kind of indication, beyond that which the context affords, that they are so employed. In fact, it is not by any general method that would prove design, but only by accident, that the Chinese ever mark the distinction in question; and when their words do not happen to point it out, their symbols mostly fail to do so. Their writing is scarcely more exempt from confusion, in this respect, than their language, although they have above thirty times as many graphic, as verbal signs.

subjoining to them one or more characters indicative of action; and it is evident that a Chinese might effect the same object without destroying the unity of the characters corresponding to his several words, by the addition to each of them, when used in such sense, of some peculiar mark or key;—a mode of distinction which he is already in the habit of employing for other purposes. But his dictionaries show clearly that he does not distinguish between the leading parts of speech, either in this, or in any other way; and, consequently, afford, in addition to the negative proof already noticed, a decisive positive one, that he is still ignorant of the very first principles of grammar. A few examples from the second Part of Dr. Morrison's able compilation will, I apprehend, be sufficient to place this fact in a striking point of view. The characters in the first volume of this Part are all numbered; and, after the star here substituted for a character, are arranged, first, the number of each of those which I have happened nearly at random to select, then, its pronunciation, and thirdly, its various significations.

* —591—*Ché*—a stream of water;—to put in order; to heal; to rule; to direct; to govern a family or a nation; to form.—Denotes some end being sought;—experienced; accustomed to;—the petty affairs of prisons; the retired apartments of the sect *Taou*.—The same character is also pronounced *Tae* and *E*.

* —726—*Chě*—pervious; penetrable;—to penetrate;—penetration;—perspicacious; intelligent; discerning;—that may be passed through; passable;—a road;—to skin; to peel off the skin; to cultivate land; to throw in ruins; to pull to pieces; to remove or take away food whilst the music plays.

* —915—*Chih*—The body or substantial part of; the substance or matter of;—to substantiate, as by witnesses; to confront; to examine; to settle or fix; to realize;—plain; unadorned; true; sincere;—a mark at which to shoot; a kind of agreement for wholesale merchandize; the ground or nature of; regular correct procedure; the part which the hand grasps in a bow; a surname.

* —2185—*Fàn*—the agent by which things are turned;—to turn contrary to the first direction; to turn back; to return;—again and again;—contrary to;—contrariwise; on the contrary;—to act contrary to; to rebel.

* —3052—*Gǒ, Ō, or Hǒ*—appearance of the mouth of a fish; fish moving their mouths; appearance of many fish; noise made in laughing; as Ha! ha!—When read *Shǎ, Sǎ, Hǒ, or Tǎ*—to suck and drink;—noise made in eating or drinking.—When read *Hea*—a Mohammedan surname; a kingdom of the Toorks.

Here the reader may observe jumbled together, under the designation of a common character, substantives—adjectives—participles, active and passive—verbs—adverbs—interjections—proper names. And no part of this confusion can be laid to the account of a paucity of graphic signs; for, in fact, the number employed by the Chinese is abundantly great, and even if it were not, they might have reduced the meanings of each symbol under different heads, according as they are connected with different parts of speech, in like manner as is done in English dictionaries with the significations of every word that is both a verb and a noun. Indeed the jumble and derangement of grammatic powers just exemplified, afford a very decisive proof, that the Chinese have not yet arrived at a clear conception of those powers, nor have formed any distinct classification of them in their thoughts.^a But if a knowledge of grammar were attainable without the aid of alphabetic writing, no people are more likely than the Chinese to have so acquired it; as, exclusively of the consideration of their natural shrewdness, and the length of time they have had for trying the experiment, they stand in greater want of the acquisition than any others; and, conse-

^a The Chinese, I admit, are represented by European grammarians as having got a distinct name for verbs, which they call *hǒ-tseú*, that is to say, *living words*; but whether this expression was formed by themselves or by others for their use, their dictionaries evidently show that they have adopted it, not from any clear idea of the distinction thereby implied, but merely from an imperfect observation of classifications used by foreigners.

quently, have had a stronger inducement to make it. In other languages, particularly in simple ones, the inflexions of the terms may be sufficiently prominent to arrest attention, and cause a regular use to be made of them, even though men should not be conscious to themselves of having observed any rules on the subject; and the principle of imitation may supply the place of technical skill, in still farther promoting a uniformity and regularity of style. In such languages, therefore, whether spoken or alphabetically written, it is very possible that persons might express themselves in a clear, intelligible manner, without having any knowledge of grammar. But, in the Chinese tongue, there is a vagueness essentially inherent, which is to be attributed not only to the small number of the terms, but also to their want of inflexions; and although the part of it arising from the former cause, is, in some measure, removed from the writing of this people, by the circumstance of their having, on an average, between thirty and forty characters for each word, yet that arising from the latter, as has been already shown, never can, till they arrive at some just conception of grammatical distinctions.

In the above examples it may be observed that, independently of grammatic differences, the variety of meanings for each character is fully as great as of those belonging to most European words, and evidently arises from the same cause,—namely, gradual transitions from one meaning to another, and changes of signification that are thus in a constant state of being produced in the course of time;—but the phenomenon is more marked in a system in which the meanings of a word are distributed among above thirty different signs, than in those in which there is only one way of writing each word. The inspection, therefore, of a single Chinese dictionary is of itself sufficient to refute the wonderful immutability which is claimed for the graphic system under consideration, and to show that, even if the characters belonging to this system had remained as unchanged in shape as it is contended they have, for nearly two thousand years, still the written language must have been quite altered in that long

interval; and, consequently, that, if the writings ascribed to Confucius were really as old as is asserted, they would be now totally unintelligible. But if the differences between successive dictionaries be taken into account, which are admitted to be so great as that none but the most learned can make use of the older ones, then this conclusion will be still more clearly brought home to our conviction.

From the first and last of the examples I have given, it will be seen that changes are continually going forward, not only in the meanings of the characters, but also, with respect to some of them at least, in the sounds by which they are read. We have here, therefore, presented to us a practical illustration of the total inefficacy of the means resorted to by the Chinese, for the preservation of proper names; for where a single character may, even at the present time, be connected with so many and such different words as *Gǒ, Ō, Hǒ, Shǎ, Sǎ, Tǎ, Hea*, how, in a system of this description, can any assigned symbol be depended on, to represent the same word now that it formerly did? Alphabetic writing is, I admit, not entirely exempt from a like imperfection; but in proportion as its elements are fewer than the Chinese characters, they must be more fixed in the mind, and, consequently, less subject to change of pronunciation. Indeed there is no reason to think that the powers of those, for instance, in the Roman alphabet, have been in the least altered, with the exception of the vowels and a very few of the consonants. The name, therefore, which is represented by any group of Roman letters, is probably the same, in its principal articulations, now, as when this group was first composed; and the change in its pronunciation, which has been slowly produced in the course of time, is only partial. But in the Chinese system, each character is associated with an entire word; the changes, consequently, which here go forward, are, in all probability, not only more rapid in the proportion just mentioned, but also more injurious; since they are total, or it is, at all events, only by accident that they are partial: and that the efforts of the Chinese to prevent such changes—whether by the onerous ex-

pedient of getting by heart their principal family names in connexion with certain graphic signs, or by the aid of their dictionaries—are quite ineffectual, is fully proved, even by a cursory view of the dictionaries themselves.

Before I quit the subject of grammar, I have to notice two very remarkable properties of Chinese composition. They consist in the frequent omission of a symbol for the idea which in language would be expressed by the substantive verb; and, on the other hand, in the frequent insertion of symbols for—no idea;—symbols corresponding, in this use of them, to the expletives or euphonic particles of language. The former property arises out of the very nature of ideagraphy, and, in consequence, is common to the graphic systems of the Egyptians and Chinese; but the latter is evidently repugnant to such nature, and could have arisen solely from observation of writing of a very different kind. The omission alluded to, is not so often observable in modern Chinese as in that of older date;—a circumstance which may be accounted for, by the close connexion between the characters and words, engrafted upon the system since the time of its original formation; for the substantive verb is of familiar occurrence in all languages, whereas the idea of existence is one of great abstractedness and obscurity. Hence, in the classic style, even when a symbol is introduced for the expression of this thought, it is found, in general, not to denote immediately and properly the notion of *being*, but to have some meaning very remotely connected therewith. This peculiar feature of the Chinese system is explained and exemplified in the following articles of M. Abel-Remusat's Grammar:—
 “152. On a coutume de faire l'ellipse du verbe substantif, toutes les fois qu'il s'agit seulement d'attribuer une qualité à un sujet; dans ce cas, on met quelquefois une particule insignifiante entre le substantif et l'adjectif, pour marquer la suspension :

<i>kiún</i>	<i>tseù</i>	<i>tchî</i>	<i>táo</i>	<i>fěi</i>	<i>êul</i>	<i>yén</i>
sapientis			via	ampla	et	obscura

‘La voie du sage *est* ample et cachée.’ *Tchoung-young*.

君子¹
子²

之道³
道⁴

費而⁵
而⁶

隱⁷

柴¹
也²
愚³

參⁴
也⁵
魯⁶

師⁷
也⁸
辟⁹

由¹⁰
也¹¹
嘒¹²

回¹
北風其涼

之²
雨雪其雱

惠而好我

攜手同行

其虛其邪

既亟只且

寄友人

病多慵引架書看。

官職無才興已闌。

穴鳳瑞時來却易。

人龍別後見何難。

琴樽風月閒生計。

金玉松筠舊歲寒。

早晚烟村碧江畔。

挂簪重對蓼花灘。

tchhâi yè iû sên yè lòi ssé yè phî yeoù yè yân
 Tchhaï stolidus; Sen ignarus; Sse levis; Yeou rudis
 ‘Tchhaï *est* peu éclairé; Sen *est* peu instruit; Sse *est* léger;
 Yeou *est* grossier dans ses manières.’ *Lun-iu.*

“N : B : Ce sont les noms de quatre disciples de Confucius, au sujet desquels le philosophe prononçoit ce jugement.

“153. Quand il s’agit d’attribuer plus positivement à un sujet une qualité qui emporte l’idée d’une action, on se sert du mot * *’wêi*, qui peut se rendre par *être* (N : B : Ce mot signifie proprement *faire*):

hœi tchî ’wêi jîn yè

Hœi erat vir

‘Hœi étoit (véritablement) un homme.’ *Tchoung-young.*”

The originals of the three passages here adduced, are the first three examples in Plate VI.; in which the characters are numbered, to show the order of their arrangement, and, thereby, the Chinese words by which they are respectively to be read. Those words are not arranged like the characters, but in the European manner, for the purpose of making them correspond in position with the equivalent parts of the Latin translation and French paraphrase.

The foregoing passages sufficiently illustrate the difficulty of expressing any modification of *being* in writing whose elements do not, or rather did not originally, assist the mind by an immediate suggestion of words. Still further, they serve to show the continuance of the effect resulting from this difficulty, after its cause had been, in a great measure, removed. For in those same examples, the symbols have a direct reference to the Chinese words by which they are read; and there is precisely for each of them a word. In such a degree of correspondence between the two classes of signs there is nothing surprising, in the case of modern Chinese writing; because, from the manner in which its ingredients are committed to memory in immediate association with words, they have the borrowed nature of alphabetic designations transferred to them; whence, in the mode of speaking of them now prevalent, they are just as much identified

with words as the groups of letters are, which express the same words. But what deserves attention is, that the correspondence in question equally holds in the writing of Confucius; from which circumstance it plainly follows, that the elements of that writing must have been penned by him, or, at least, have had their present appearance ingrafted on them, since the introduction of letters into China. One of the clearest indications of the close connexion subsisting between the symbols and words of the Chinese sage, lies in the occurrence in his writing of characters without meaning, which correspond exactly in situation with the expletives or euphonic particles that are made use of, in reading each passage into Chinese. It is evident that these graphic signs of ideas, which, in such situations, drop their proper nature, and are transmuted into mere signs of sounds, could never have been so employed, till after an immediate and direct connexion had been established between the Chinese ideagrams and words; and that connexion, it has been already proved, could never have arisen, till after the use of letters had been brought under the observation of the Chinese. I shall now proceed to show that some of the symbols in the above extracts from the works of our author, are thus used without sense, and, consequently, more after the manner of alphabetic than of ideographic designations.

The second symbol in the series of characters marked No. 1, is not, in this example, employed without meaning; although the Chinese word with which it is identified, *tseù*, has no Latin term placed under it. This symbol has been already noticed as an ingredient in the ideographic name of Confucius; where it signifies *a sage*, and, coming after another character of the same signification, it, by this repetition, adds intensity to the expression of his wisdom. But, in the adduced passage, it also follows a sign for *a wise man*, and, therefore, may be considered as, in like manner, rendering that sign more expressive. There are many instances, however, in the works of the Chinese philosopher as well as in more modern compositions, in which this explanation cannot be applied to the use made of the sym-

bol under examination. Thus it is frequently written after the character pronounced *jih*, which signifies *a day*, and which, with this accompaniment, has still only the same meaning. Thus, again, when placed after the ideagram for *a house*, which by the Chinese is read *fang*, it does not, in the least, alter the meaning of that ideagram. M. Abel-Remusat gives these two examples, which he introduces with the following general observation. “Beaucoup de mots sont formés d’un radical accompagné du mot * *tseu* (fils), *qui est alors purement explétif*, et qui fait l’office de terminaison.”—*Gram. Chin.* art. 291. And Dr. Morrison, in the Part of his Dictionary in which the symbols are distinguished by numbers, states respecting this same character, numbered by him 11233, that “*tsze* follows many nouns as *a mere euphonic particle*.”

The third symbol in the first example, which is read by the Chinese word *tchi*, is not in this place of its occurrence entirely without meaning, as it serves to point out the relation of the preceding noun to that which immediately follows ;—a relation, however, which is equally indicated without its aid, by the position of those nouns, the first of two which are not separated by a verb, being, in the Chinese language, always in the genitive case. But in the third example, where this symbol is placed between two answering to a noun and a verb, it is employed without any signification attached to it. Of *tchi* in such situations M. Abel-Remusat observes : “Il est souvent encore pris comme *particule explétive* après le sujet d’un verbe ;—” *Gram. Chin.* art. 190. And he applies this observation equally to the symbol, as to the word with which he identifies it.

The last symbol of the third example, and its Chinese pronunciation *ye*, are alike insignificant, in reference to the immediate train of thought expressed in this passage. They, however, each of them, here denote that the sentence is ended, and the symbol is thus made to perform the office of a stop ;—an application of it which is not repugnant to the nature of ideagraphy, and which must have been useful in Chinese writing, before signs for pauses were introduced into it. But in the second

example this same character is written without meaning or use of any kind. The service assigned to the particle *ye* in the four corresponding situations in the spoken passage, is to prevent the words between which it is interposed, from being blended in utterance, or pronounced as parts of one and the same compound expression. But the like service cannot be ascribed to the symbol *ye*; as the Chinese characters have generally separate significations; so that the interposition between any two of a third, is of no use to show when they should be considered as distinct signs, though it might be of some, to point out the particular instances in which they were to be united in the denotation of a single subject. It is perfectly obvious, therefore, that the symbol in question would never have been inserted in the ideographic representation of this passage, if the expletive *ye* had not occurred in the same passage as spoken in Chinese; that, in this example, it has nearly as immediate a reference to a sound without sense, as the alphabetic group *ye* has; and that it is here applied to a non-ideographic use, just in the same manner as it is in modern Chinese writing. From Dr. Morrison's account of this symbol, arranged under the head of the fifth radical with two additional strokes, it is plain that the Chinese at present identify it with a mere euphonic particle. "They," he tells us, "remark a difference in its import, according to its being * * *king tŭh*, or * * *chung tŭh*, i. e. read without, or with emphasis. In the first case, they compare it to *the mere sound of an instrument, after the last note is struck*; when read with emphasis, they consider it gives a tone of decision to the sentiment They define it by * * * * *yu che yu yay*, 'the excess, or superabundance of a sentence.' " Yay is Dr. Morrison's way of writing the Chinese word which is now identified with this symbol, and which, it would appear, was equally so, as early as the time of Confucius.

In connexion with the style of the Chinese their poetry naturally comes under consideration; and here may be observed still more vagueness and obscurity than in their prose, for the same general reasons that operate in every country to render

the one species of composition more difficult than the other. My principal object, however, in adverting to the subject, is to notice two properties of this poetry, which it is very curious to find in ideographic writing, and which could scarcely, by any possibility, have been thence derived; I mean its metre and its rhyme. Indeed it is hard to conceive how the former property, even with the aid of any writing whatever, could be introduced into compositions in a language entirely made up of monosyllables. But the Chinese words, as pronounced by the natives, can scarcely be considered as monosyllabic; since they are lengthened by being chanted in a species of *recitativo*, without which it would be impossible for this people, either to render perceptible any distinction between those of their vowel-sounds which alphabetic writers represent by diphthongs and triphthongs, or to give effect to their system of intonation. For instance, the third in order of their accents, the name of which is by the English written *Keu-shing*, and by the French, *Khiú-ching*, is described by M. Abel-Remusat as follows: “La voix, d’abord égale, comme dans le ton *phing*, s’élève en finissant, et se perd en s’en allant.”—Art. 52. What this accent is, probably cannot be exactly known, except by one who has heard it from the mouth of a native Chinese; but, without pretending to determine its nature, I think I may venture to infer from the description of it here given, that no word uttered according to this accentuation, could be pronounced as short as one of our monosyllables.

Now the Chinese characters denote properly and immediately, thoughts, not words; and though they are at present very closely connected with the Chinese words, yet the correspondence between the two sets of signs has been shown to have arisen from extrinsic causes. But, setting aside this consideration, and even supposing that the Chinese had got their symbols exactly to correspond to their words without foreign aid, still those symbols could never of themselves have led to rhyme or metre; since it is not parts of words, but entire words, that they would have been thus independently brought to express. As to the

system by which, in the Tonic dictionaries of the Chinese, some of their characters are made to denote the beginnings and some the endings of words, the very imperfect manner in which it is understood by them, goes a great way towards showing, that in their peculiar circumstances they were incapable of this invention; and, at any rate, it has been already proved, I submit, beyond all doubt, to have been, not discovered by them, but derived from the Sanscrit alphabet. But, until their writing afforded them a mode of expressing the terminations of words, it never could have suggested to them the idea of rhyme; nor, until it expressed parts of words, could it have led them to metre:^a and in reference to the latter point, it affords no

^a In the twelfth volume of the Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy there is an ingenious Essay by Andrew Carmichael, Esq., in which he ascribes the origin of alphabetic writing to the analyzing powers of some poet, exerted in contriving a mode of transmitting his verses to distant ages. In this Essay the author shows very clearly that an alphabet might be derived from an analysis of the first four verses of the *Æneid*; but he quite overlooked the circumstance, that the writer of those verses, or at any rate the writer of the first verses of the kind, must have had a clear conception of the syllabic composition of his words, before he could have arranged those words in metre. This way, then, of accounting for the origin of alphabetic writing is obviously "placing the car before the horse;" and, to see its fallacy in a strong light, we have only to ask ourselves the question: could a person—who had never heard any metrical poetry, and, therefore, was not instinctively guided by his ear in the process of imitation,—compose in metre, without being previously acquainted with the elements of words upon which that very metre depended? The ingenious author further takes it for granted, that the analyzer in question would have selected for the syllables, *ma, ca, fa, la, ra, ta*, signs differing in their commencement, but all having a common termination; whence he concluded that men could at once arrive at a superior alphabet, without stopping at the intermediate stage of a syllabary. But here again, I rather suspect, we have another instance of the same inversion of just arrangement; and our reasoner appears to have set out with tacitly assuming the very point which he wanted to establish by proof. For, before signs of syllables could be selected in the manner he imagined, the decomposition of those syllables into consonants and vowels must have been clearly known.

There is one remark more of Mr. Carmichael's which I wish here to notice. He conceives that if we had access to the first document that ever was alphabetically written, the position of the letters in it would serve to account for the

ground of objection, that, in their particular system, the metre is made to depend upon accents; for these, it appears, cause them virtually to lengthen their monosyllables, and distinguish them into parts.

The use of metre commenced in Europe, before the times to which profane annals reach back with any degree of certainty; and we must, consequently, search for hints respecting its origin in mythology, rather than in the pages of regular history. Of those hints such as I have been able to collect are, I admit, obscure, and not much to be depended on; but still, as far as they have any weight, they are perfectly consistent with the view of the matter which I have just submitted to the reader's judgment. Thus the invention of metre is most generally ascribed to the Muses; but those goddesses were also held to have bestowed upon man the gift of letters. Thus again, some authors have given the credit of this invention to the *Curetes*; some to the *Corybantes*; some to the *Idæi Dactyli*: but all these, as Sir Isaac Newton has shown with a considerable degree of probability in his work upon Chronology, were Phœnician exiles, distinguished by different appellations in the different places to which they fled, who were banished from their country at the same time as Cadmus and his sister Europa. Those fugitives, therefore, brought with them letters as well as the art of metrical composition; and, indeed, Sir Isaac quotes Clemens Alexandrinus in support of this very fact, in the following terms: "*Clemens* (Strom. lib. 1.) calls the *Idæi Dactyli* barba-

arrangement of the characters in the oldest alphabet, whichever that may have been. Now, as it happens, we have in our hands the very document he speaks of, which, as I have already proved in the first Part of this work, is the Decalogue in the original Hebrew; and the first letter in this document, which is also the one most frequently used throughout the entire of it, is actually the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet. But our author's conjecture proves to be correct only as far as respects this letter. It may, however, be worth adding, that in the document in question all the letters of the Hebrew alphabet are found, with the single exception of *Teth*; which, as being of a power cognate to that of *Taw*, is not absolutely essential to the system.

rous, that is, strangers ; and saith, that they were reputed the first wise men, to whom both the letters which they call *Ephesian*, and the invention of musical rhymes are referred : it seems that when the Phœnician letters, ascribed to Cadmus, were brought into Greece, they were at the same time brought into Phrygia and Crete, by the *Curetes* ; who settled in those countries, and called them Ephesian, from the city Ephesus, where they were first taught.”—*Chronology of ancient Kingdoms amended*, p. 147. I shall add but one instance more, which approaches nearer than the preceding ones to the ground occupied by real history. Linus is recorded to have invented metre ; but he is also stated to have been acquainted with letters, and to have modified the powers of the Phœnician ones so as to adapt them for the expression of the Greek language. Of this personage Diodorus tells us, on the authority of Dionysius, a still older writer than himself, “ that Linus was, among the Greeks, the first inventor of rhythm and melody ; and, moreover, that Cadmus having brought from Phœnicia the characters called letters, he [Linus] was the first that transferred them to the Grecian dialect.”^a

In further support of the foregoing representation of the subject, I have to remark, that the oldest poetry now extant—that occasionally found in the writings of Moses, the style of which he most probably derived from the ideagraphic poetry of the Egyptians—is wholly destitute both of metre and of rhyme ; and that the oldest poems we have in metre—those of Homer—were composed, to a certainty, long after the introduction of alphabetic writing among the Greeks. For whatever doubt there may be as to the exact era of this poet, it is, at all events, clear, that he lived after the destruction of Troy, and, consequently, many generations after Cadmus, the importer of letters

^a Φησὶ τοίνυν [Διονυσίος] παρ’ Ἑλλήσι πρῶτον εὐρετὴν γενέσθαι Λῖνον ῥυθμῶν καὶ μέλους· ἔτι δὲ, Κάδμου κομίσαντος ἐκ Φοινίκης τὰ καλούμενα γράμματα, πρῶτον εἰς τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν μεταθεῖναι διάλεκτον.—*Diodori Siculi lib. iii. c. 66.*

into Greece. I am aware of the opinion being very prevalent, that metrical compositions were at first used to supply the want of writing, in assisting men to preserve the memory of events; and I am quite ready to admit the likelihood of their having been very generally applied to this purpose in ancient times, when the use of the alphabet was known to but few. But it does not at all follow from the circumstance of oral instruction constituting one of the ways by which verses have been transmitted, and from their being thus learned by several unacquainted with letters, that, therefore, they must have been originally composed by such persons. It may, perhaps, be said that Homer was blind, and, consequently, ignorant of alphabetic writing. Now even if this had been really the case, it would not bear against my position; for he might, through his sense of hearing, have caught the idea of metre, after it had been introduced by others; as we now may sometimes find illiterate persons make verses, though unable to read or write. But, indeed, neither part of the case which has been just put respecting him, is at all tenable; the imagery he has presented to us, drawn from visible objects, is too vivid to admit of the supposition of his having been born blind; and the extent of information which he shows—a very extraordinary extent, for the early age in which he lived—renders it quite incredible that he should have been ignorant of an art which certainly was known among the Greeks in his day. If, then, he ever was blind, he must, like our Milton, have lost his sight only in the latter part of life; and no argument whatever against assigning an alphabetic origin to metre, is supplied by the instance of the earlier, any more than by that of the later, of those preeminently distinguished poets.

But even should some doubt hang over the decision of this question in the abstract, still it admits of none in its application to the particular case of the Chinese; for we have the express evidence of their own historians, that the system of accents and tones upon which their metre depends, was actually derived from the same source from which they learned the use of the

Mother Characters, that is, from the alphabetic writers of India. Dr. Morrison gives the following translation of a passage of a Chinese historic work, which he had previously quoted in the original characters, from the Imperial Dictionary written by order of the Emperor *Kang-he*. “The literati in the time of *Han* (about A. D. 200), understood letters, but were unacquainted with the Mother Characters; the literati on the left side of the great River (i. e. the north of * * * *Yang-tsze-keang*) knew the four tones, but were unacquainted with the seven sounds. Information respecting the seven sounds originated in the western regions; in which system [namely, that which originated in the western regions] thirty-six characters are constituted mothers; longitudinally are the four tones, and transversely the seven sounds.”—*Introd. to Dict.* p. v. As the Mother characters include the Finals, as well as the Initials, here mentioned, of the phonetic system of the Chinese, this passage bears moreover on the Indian origin of their method of denoting the terminations of words;—an origin of it which has already been established in the preceding chapter, from the internal evidence of the case. But until their characters were made to point attention to those terminations, they never, it is plain, could have excited the notion of rhyme. Indeed ideographic signs are, in their proper use, as unsuited to lead the mind to a conception of rhyme as to that of metre; and the one property of Chinese poetry, as well as the other, can be traced solely to an external source. How those properties came to be derived from India, is easily explained. The doctrines of Būddha are conveyed in verse;^a and, in Indian versification, particular attention is paid both to metre and to rhyme.^b

I have thought it worth while to dwell on the foreign origin

^a Gutzlaff states, respecting Būddhism, that “its literature is in verse.”—*Journal of Three Voyages, &c.*, p. 329.

^b In the tenth volume of the Asiatic Researches there is an article by Henry T. Colebrooke, Esq. on Sanscrit and Pacrit poetry; in which a full account is given of the different kinds of metre used in that poetry, and also some specimens are exhibited of Indian rhymes.

of the rhyming versification of the Chinese; because this circumstance affords some further clue to the age when Confucius lived, and serves to point out the same limit to the remoteness of that age as the one already arrived at, without being, in the slightest degree, liable to the same objection. Of the three hundred odes in the *She-king*, a compilation ascribed to this philosopher, several are in rhyme; and it cannot at all be supposed, that they did not possess this property at first, but had it subsequently communicated to them in the course of successive transcriptions. For, however the writing may have been changed in those transcriptions, the rhymes thereby expressed are an essential part of the verses they enter, and must be coeval with the original poems in question as they were, from the very first, uttered in speech or song. Those poems, then, could hardly have been composed till after the middle of the ninth century, the earliest date, as has been already shown, that can reasonably be allowed to the introduction of the Hindu poetry into China; and, consequently, the life of Confucius must be placed after that epoch, or within the last thousand years. It is stated that the odes of the *She-king* were very old, when he brought them together into one collection; and, if the fact were really so, it would enable me to affix a still closer limit to the age in which he flourished. But, considering the great obscurity and uncertainty in which statements bearing on very remote times must be involved, when they rest chiefly on the authority of ideographic documents, and alphabetic writing has been made use of only as a collateral and subordinate aid in their preservation, no stress can, I apprehend, be laid on the one before us, as affording any just ground for a further reduction of the Chinese sage's antiquity.

I shall conclude what I have to state upon the subject of Chinese poetry, by laying before the reader two specimens of it in the symbolic character, with their translations. The original poems are exhibited in Plate VI., where they are marked Nos. 4 and 5. The first of them is given by M. Abel-Remusat from the *She-king*; and his reading of the symbols in Chinese,

and French version of the ode, are as follow. The Chinese words are placed so as to correspond in situation with the equivalent symbols, and, consequently, are to be read in columns from top to bottom; while the columns are to be taken in order from right to left; the external column on the right side answering to the first line of the French translation, the next column to the second line, and so on.

<i>kí</i>	<i>khî</i>	<i>hî</i>	<i>hoéi</i>	<i>iú</i>	<i>pě</i>
<i>kǐ</i>	<i>hiú</i>	<i>chèou</i>	<i>eúl</i>	<i>sioúei</i>	<i>foúng</i>
<i>tchì</i>	<i>khî</i>	<i>thoúng</i>	<i>háo</i>	<i>khî</i>	<i>khî</i>
<i>tsiú</i>	<i>siú</i>	<i>háng</i>	<i>'ò</i>	<i>pháng</i>	<i>liáng</i>

“ Le vent du nord vient glacer nos climats.

La neige tombe à gros flocons.

Que l'être bienveillant qui m'aime, mette sa main dans la mienne,
Pour que nous marchions ensemble.

Comment peut-il être si long-temps ?

Déjà il eût dû s'empresse d'accourir.”

Grammaire Chinoise, p. 174.

The second poem, marked No. 5 in Plate VI., Dr. Morrison gives as a sample of the more regular modern compositions; tells us that it belongs to “the species of ode called *She*,” and, identifying its symbols with the Chinese words by which they are read, describes it as “containing seven words in each sentence, and eight lines in all.” The lines which rhyme with each other are pointed out, by having double stops put under them. His translation of this poem, line for line, is as follows:

“ TO A FRIEND.

Through much disease, I rarely take my book from the shelf;

I hold an office, but am without ability—my spirits are broken.

When the queen of birds^a from the interstices of the mountains appeared, and times were prosperous, we easily met;

^a “ A fabulous bird, said to be seen when eminently great men appear.”—*Morrison's Gram.*

But since the man who is a prodigy, parted from me, how difficult to see him.

In playing on the *kin*, drinking in the breeze, or beneath the shining moon, I spend my life.

(But my friend valuable as) the gold and the gem remains, like the trees *Sung* and *Kiun*, unhurt by the rigours of winter.

Ere long I shall return to my obscure village, and by the side of the stream spread my net;

Then again I shall fish over against the *lǒ* flower, and the stones of the brook."

Morrison's Grammar, p. 276.

These are probably the most favourable specimens of ancient and modern Chinese poetry that our translators were respectively able to adduce; and yet it would, I apprehend, be rather difficult to point out, through the medium of their versions, any very striking beauties in either composition. What, however, is more to my present purpose, is to notice the extreme brevity of the Chinese style, as indicated in these examples. In the case of the first poem, the number of symbols, and, consequently, of Chinese words by which they are read, is only about half that of the French terms employed to express their meaning; and in the case of the second, which appears to be more literally translated, the disproportion between the number of Chinese and equivalent English words, is still greater. Such conciseness must, independently of other causes, produce considerable obscurity,—a quality, indeed, which Dr. Morrison has attributed generally to all the poetry of the Chinese; and even M. Abel-Remusat ascribes the same imperfection to it, in the following description:—"Le style des morceaux de poésie est, en général, fort élevé, concis, elliptique, rempli d'expressions allégoriques ou métaphoriques, de mots anciens ou peu usités, et d'allusions à des traits d'histoire ou à des usages, à des opinions ou à des faits peu connus. *C'est ce qui rend la poésie chinoise très-difficile.*"—*Gram. Chin.*, p. 174.

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE INADEQUATENESS OF CHINESE WRITING TO THE USE
OF SUPPLYING A PERMANENT RECORD.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE STORY OF THE CONFLAGRATION OF BOOKS—
REVIEW OF THE SEQUEL OF THIS STORY—EXPEDIENTS RESORTED
TO FOR THE PURPOSE OF SUSTAINING THIS STORY—PROBABLE
OCCUPATIONS OF THE BOARD OF HISTORY—SPURIOUS NATURE OF
THE BOOKS SAID TO BE RECOVERED FROM THE FLAMES—THE
SHOO-KING PROVED A MODERN FABRICATION—SPURIOUS NATURE
OF THE INSCRIPTIONS ASSERTED TO HAVE BEEN RECOVERED—
MOST OF THE OLDER INSCRIPTIONS DESTROYED BY THE MANDA-
RINS—THOSE WHICH HAVE ESCAPED ARE NO LONGER LEGIBLE—
FAILURE OF THE CHINESE ATTEMPT TO DECIPHER THE MONUMENT
OF YU—INSTANCES OF MODERN CHINESE BOOKS BECOMING ILLE-
GIBLE, AND IN CONSEQUENCE DESTROYED—THE CHINESE HISTORY
DERIVES NO CORROBORATION FROM COINS—DEFECTS ESSEN-
Tially INHERENT IN THE VERY NATURE OF CHINESE WRITING—
LIMIT TO THE TIME OF LAST CHANGE OF WRITING IN THE WORKS
OF CONFUCIUS—INTERNAL EVIDENCE OF THE FALSEHOOD OF
CHINESE HISTORY.

THE third subject to be examined in reference to Chinese writing, is the insufficiency of the means it affords for preserving the memory of remote events. Here I shall not take into account the utter want of veracity on the part of the Chinese, in every instance where their national vanity is concerned; although the circumstance of their being stained with such a blemish is of itself enough to deprive their annals of all authority. But my present object is, not to inquire into the moral character of this people, but into their means of recording the truth with respect to former times, supposing they were inclined so to do; and I submit, that I fully establish their

inability to effect this object, as well as the falsehood of, by far, the greater portion of their history,—of all of it, indeed, that precedes the last few centuries. Whether I have been equally successful in accounting for their mode of fabricating this history, and in detecting the contrivances to which they have resorted for the purpose of supporting its credit, I do not venture to determine; but shall merely observe that, although this latter subject be one of some interest, yet its complete elucidation is not essential to the investigation in which I am engaged. All that is material for me to prove, is the fact of the Chinese history being, for the most part, a spurious fabrication; and by this striking example to illustrate my position, as to the impossibility of a permanent record being supplied by any system of ideographic writing.

I have already noticed, in the first Part of this work, the monstrous absurdities which are involved in the story of the universal conflagration of books in China. An effort has been made to invest the narrative with some colour of probability, by comparing it with that respecting the destruction of the library of Alexandria by the Saracens; and the Emperor *Che-whang-te* has been styled by certain European writers the *Omar* of the Chinese. But there is no parallel whatever between the circumstances recorded in the two accounts. In the one case, savage conquerors are stated to have committed to the flames a prodigious number of books; which, however, as collected together in one place, they could find no difficulty in destroying, and for which, as a fancied cause of effeminacy in those whom they conquered, they were not at all unlikely, in their then state of ignorance and ferocity, to have contracted a feeling of contempt and aversion. In the other case, the representation which it is attempted to impose upon the reader, is—that a prince ordered the destruction of all (or at any rate of most of) the literary productions, and particularly of all the historic records, of his own country;—that this order was strictly enforced throughout the whole extent of his dominions, not by foreign and barbarian troops, but by native authorities;—

that no where did his subjects endeavour to evade it, by concealing their more valued books, to be brought back to light, and again made use of, in more propitious times ;—that, on the contrary, they were every where so anxious to cooperate in effacing the remembrance of the exploits of their own forefathers, and obliterating all traces of the ancient glories of their nation, that they actually assisted the government, in finding out such of their countrymen as were skilled in the history of former times, in order that, by the execution of all such persons, the possibility of the revival of that history might be prevented.^a And yet the people who are represented as having acted in so strange a manner, are described, in every account of them that is entitled to the least credit, as those of all others who carry their veneration for antiquity to the greatest excess, and whose fondness for ancient inscriptions or ancient records of any kind, can only be equalled by the superstitious regard for relics which prevailed during the dark ages in Europe. Different versions of this extravagant fiction have been, from time to time, put forward ; but, in its principal ingredients, it is too much interwoven with the authorized annals of China to be now got rid of ; and in spite of all the ingenuity and exertions of the learned in that country to soften down those features of the scene which are most revolting to common sense, still quite enough of paradox remains, to expose the true nature of the historic structure which has been raised on so visionary a basis.

Before the graphic system of the Chinese received those

^a The part of the story here referred to, merely informs us, that all those versed in the history of China who had not fled from the country, were put to death by the emperor's command ; but all of them certainly could not have been discovered for the purpose, except through the active and voluntary help of the people. Without that help it is plain that the imperial decree must have been in part evaded. Thus, when Edward I. of England ordered the massacre of all the bards in Wales, in spite of his vigilance and power some of those bards escaped ; because the Welsh yielded no willing support to the enforcement of his ruthless edict.

important aids to stability which it appears to have derived from alphabetic writing, from dictionaries, and from printing, and when, consequently, it was still more imperfect than it is at present, it may perhaps, notwithstanding, have served the purposes of ordinary communication, in reference to the occurrences of the passing day, as well as it now does; and, thence, the defect by which it was affected, of not affording a more durable or certain memorial of events than that which oral tradition supplies—a defect essentially belonging to all systems that are purely ideagraphic—may have not been perceived by an ignorant public, anxious only about present convenience, or even by the learned, who, like other persons, can judge of the advantages they possess only by comparison. But when Sanscrit and Tibetan books, containing the doctrines of Būddhism, were imported into the Celestial Empire, and the power of reading them was spread by the priesthood of a large and influential sect, the literati of China must have become aware of the principal imperfection of their own system. The want of ancient Chinese records that were legible, would then be felt, and the story we have been just considering, most probably grew out of the desire to account for that want, without acknowledging its true cause, or lowering the credit of the national writing; the difficulties produced by the explanation having escaped notice, till after they had been rendered irremovable, through the prolonged legibility of documents in this character by means of collateral alphabetic evidence, and more especially through the diffusion of such evidence among foreigners.

The difficulty which most embarrasses the supporters of this story, arises from there not having been originally inserted in it, or soon after introduced, any exemption from the general conflagration of books in favour of the writings of Confucius. The omission affords, I apprehend, some ground for suspecting that the date at first assigned to this imaginary event, was prior to the age in which the Chinese sage was then supposed to have lived: although it must, in all likelihood, have been subsequent

to the end of the eighth century; as, otherwise, the fiction resorted to would not have extended to the case of the latest of the works for whose disappearance it was desired to impose a delusive reason upon the public. This fiction, indeed, could not have been thought of, till after the days of Confucius, since he has nowhere made the slightest allusion to it;—a circumstance which must have soon suggested the necessity of representing his compositions as written previously to the occurrence of the catastrophe in question, and so far inverting the order of the dates connected with the subject, if they had not been all along thus arranged. But, however this may be, the time when the philosopher flourished is placed before that of the burning of the books, and both epochs are fixed, it would appear, much earlier than at first, in every version of the tale now extant; while, in that of greatest repute in China, they have been removed backward, in the dark expanse of a fictitious succession of by-gone ages, to a distance that is nearly boundless. The sect of the followers of Lao-tseu, who style themselves the *Tao-ssé*, make the death of Confucius precede the commencement of our era by above two millions of years, or—to speak with the accuracy to which they pretend—by exactly 2,267,480 years; the world having been at the latter epoch, according to their calculation, precisely 4,534,482 years old.^a I am aware of its being the fashion of the present day to look upon this account of time as ridiculed and despised by the Chinese; and so, I admit, it is by some of them. But the fairest way to judge of the credit attached to a theory in any country, is to consider the number and condition of those by

^a I give these numbers on the authority of M. Klaproth. In his description of the chronological system of the Japanese, which, it appears, they have derived from that maintained by the Chinese sect of the *Tao-ssé*, he says: “*Ya-ghen-si* a tâché d’ajuster la chronologie mythologique des Chinois avec celle des Japonais, et il adopte le système de la secte des *Tao-szu*, qui fixent la mort de Confucius à 2,267,002 ans après la création du monde, et par conséquent 2,267,480 ans avant J. C.”—*Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, tom. xii. p. 403.

whom it is there maintained; and the reputation of the system in question, when examined by this test, will be found to stand very high in China. Notwithstanding the gross and degrading superstition of the Tao-ssé, and the barefaced impostures which they practise, yet their religious creed is continually spreading through all classes of the nation, and now extends beyond the territories of the Celestial Empire into the adjoining countries. On this point it will be sufficient to quote the testimony of the Abbé Grosier and of M. Julien. The former writer, in his treatise upon China, after giving an account of the progress of this sect, observes: “Le temps, qui dissipe ordinairement l’illusion et l’imposture, ne fit qu’affermir cette méprisable secte. De siècle en siècle, on la vit recevoir de nouveaux accroissements: la protection des princes, la faveur des grands, les scènes d’admiration ou de terreur dont le prestige et l’adresse frappoient l’esprit des peuples, tout concourut à la répandre et à la perpétuer;—” *De la Chine*, troisième édition, tom. iv. p. 442. The latter, in the preface to his translation of an account of the doctrines of the Tao-ssé, from which I have already given some extracts, informs us that: “Depuis la dynastie des Han, c’est-à-dire depuis dix-huit siècles, jusqu’à la dynastie actuelle, la secte des Tao-ssé a continué à s’étendre non seulement en Chine, mais même dans un grand nombre de pays voisins. Elle est aujourd’hui très répandue en Cochinchine, au Tonquin, et au Japon.”—*Avertissement*, p. viii. But an essential part of the creed of the Tao-ssé is their strange system of chronology; and, consequently, it is obvious that their religion could not have made so extensive a progress as is here certified, without this system getting into very general estimation in China.

I grant, however, that the literati, or followers of the tenets of Confucius,—a sect far less considerable in numbers than that respecting which the above quotations have been given,—do not carry back the leading points of their history to times so enormously remote, having fixed the birth and death of their chief philosopher, and the conflagration of books, at dates which correspond respectively with the years B. C. 551, 479,

and 213. Yet still the retrograde nature of the movement is in both instances the same, and the one system has naturally grown out of the other; that which is pushed to more extravagant lengths having, as is usual among an ignorant people, the greater number of advocates and supporters. But it is not necessary to press the parent system with the embarrassments of its offspring, as it is quite enough weighed down with those more immediately affecting itself; with the further consideration of which I shall now proceed. Here then the question obviously arises: how comes it that the works of Confucius are now in existence, and is not their preservation directly at variance with the transactions of the reign of the Emperor Chwang-te, which the Chinese historians have themselves recorded? The reply to this question leads me to the sequel of the story of the conflagration;—a sequel which, I will venture to assert, is not outdone even by the part already described, in absurdity and self-contradiction.

The hypothesis having been adopted that Confucius lived before the time of the conflagration of books, and, consequently, that all his writings were then destroyed, their recovery is accounted for as follows. The edict for the destruction of all books, or at any rate of all ancient or historic ones, was not revoked till after it had been full sixty years in force. The greatest desire then arose to recover the works of the Chinese sage, particularly the *Shoo-king*,^a or Book of the Ancient History of China; and most fortunately an old man, named Fouseng, above ninety years of age, was found, who had learned this very book by heart in his youth; for, it seems, the practice which at present prevails of getting by rote the literary productions of Confucius, was equally observed before the conflagration, the education of the learned having been, in this respect, above 2053 years ago, precisely the same as it is now. Immediately

^a This is the English mode of expressing the sound of the name in question: according to the French orthography (which, in writing it, I have sometimes followed) it is *Chou-king* or *Chu-king*.

Tchao-tso, a member of the Board of History—for, it seems too, there was then also exactly such a Board as exists at present—was despatched to the residence of Fou-seng, to take down in writing from his dictation the contents of the Shoo-king: as this old man was too decrepit to be able himself to write; nor had he ever during the preceding sixty years dared to commit to paper a single line of the work for the assistance of his memory. Upon the arrival of Tchao-tso, the articulation of the nonagenarian was so indistinct as to be quite unintelligible to a stranger; but a young girl, his daughter, could distinguish what he said; and while she repeated each word after her father, it was committed to writing by the commissioner, who thus was enabled to restore to the world twenty-five chapters out of the hundred, of which this book originally consisted. Just one-and-twenty years after, by a most fortunate accident, a copy of the work itself, as well as copies of several others of great value, was found concealed in the walls of the house of Confucius (a building then about 400 years old), while the Chinese were throwing it down to erect on its site a temple to his honour. This copy was partly eaten away by worms, and, besides, was written in very ancient characters, then out of use, which had been invented 2818 years before by Fou-hi;^a it was, however, perfectly deciphered by Kong-ngan-koué, a member of the family of the philosopher, aided by other learned men, associated with him for the purpose by order of the emperor (for nothing

^a There is a difference between Chinese historians respecting the invention which they attribute to Fou-hi, whether it extended to the actual construction of the characters in question, or only to the principles of their construction. According to the latter account of the matter, which is that given in the Chinese Annals, they were for the first time actually formed about 150 years after this emperor's death, by Tsang-kié, President of the first Board of History. The circumstance is related in P. de Mailla's translation as follows:—"Hoang-ti ordonna à Tsang-kié, homme d'une grande étendue de génie, qu'il avoit choisi pour présider à ce nouveau tribunal [le tribunal d'historiens], de travailler incessamment à la composition des caractères, suivant les six règles données par Fou-hi."—*Histoire Générale de la Chine*, tom. i. p. 19.

could be done in those days, any more than at present, without a board of commissioners), who, as well as himself, had made this ancient character their particular study. By such means it was ascertained that the writing taken down by Tchao-tso, as far as it went, agreed exactly, word for word, with that of Confucius; the memory of Fou-seng being found to have failed in no other respect, than in representing the portion of the original enunciated by him, as containing only twenty-five, instead of twenty-nine chapters. Besides these, there were twenty-nine more deciphered from the above copy; and thus were recovered the fifty-eight chapters of which the Shoo-king, in its present state, consists.

The heads of this account of the matter will be found in the following extracts from the preface written by P. de Mailla to his translation of the Annals of China: "Ce ne fut qu'environ soixante ans après l'incendie des livres, et sous l'empereur Hiao-ouen-ti, qu'on pensa à rétablir cette perte. A cette époque, la liberté rendue aux lettrés, permit aux savans de donner tous leurs soins à faire revivre l'ancienne histoire, et principalement les cent chapitres dont étoit composé le *Chu-king*; mais quelques mouvemens qu'ils se donnassent, quelques recherches qu'ils fissent, ils ne purent jamais en recouvrer un exemplaire. Les lettrés de ces temps-là, comme ceux d'aujourd'hui, n'étoient pas censés connoître un livre, s'ils ne le savoient par cœur, à pouvoir le réciter imperturbablement d'un bout à l'autre. On s'adressa à un certain Fou-seng de Tsi-nan, âgé de plus de quatre-vingt-dix ans, et dont la naissance par conséquent avoit précédé l'incendie des livres, d'environ trente ans. . . . Fou-seng avoit la mémoire heureuse; cependant quoiqu'il sût le *Chu-king* par cœur, jamais il n'osa l'écrire, pour ne pas s'exposer à la rigueur de l'édit. . . . on députa Tchao-tso, officier du tribunal de l'histoire, avec ordre d'en tirer tout ce qu'il pourroit. Lorsque Tchao-tso arriva à Tsi-nan, et qu'il eut dit à Fou-seng le sujet de sa mission, ce vieillard voulut aussi-tôt écrire lui-même ce que la fidélité de sa mémoire lui fourniroit; la foiblesse de ses mains ne le lui permit

pas. Tchao-tso voulut écrire sous sa dictée, mais Fou-seng articuloit si mal, qu'il ne l'entendoit qu'à moitié, et perdoit la plupart des choses qu'il disoit. Fou-seng ne se rebuta pas ; il avoit une jeune fille qu'il fit venir pour lui servir d'interprête, et en effet, elle répéta à Tchao-tso tout ce que disoit son père, et Tchao-tso avoit soin d'écrire. Ce fut de cette manière qu'on recouvra jusqu'à vingt-neuf articles ou livres du *Chu-king*, que Fou-seng, en les récitant, ne divisa qu'en vingt-cinq, Ces vingt-neuf articles ou livres, eurent d'abord une grande vogue parmi les lettrés ; chacun s'empressa de les avoir, et plusieurs les apprirent par cœur. Cependant, eu égard à l'âge avancé de Fou-seng, et à la manière dont ce qu'il avoit dit, étoit passé à Tchao-tso, beaucoup de lettrés ne se fioient que très-légèrement à ce rétablissement du *Chu-king*, lorsque par un bonheur inespéré, on en trouva un exemplaire dans un temps où on s'y attendoit le moins, sous le règne de l'empereur Han-ou-ti, cent trente-deux ans avant l'Ere chretienne. Voici comment." [Here follows the well-known story of the books found in the hole in the wall]. " Quoique ces livres fussent en partie rongés des vers, et d'ailleurs écrits en caractères *Ko-teou-ouen*, ou anciens, qu'on ne connoissoit presque plus alors, cette heureuse découverte fit espérer à Kong-ngan-koué, neveu à la onzième génération de Confucius, qu'avec les connoissances qu'il avoit, et aidé des vingt-cinq chapitres dictés par Fou-seng, il pourroit, secondé par d'habiles gens, venir à bout de déchiffrer ce qui restoit dans cet exemplaire. Kong-ngan-koué, dès sa plus tendre jeunesse, avoit beaucoup cultivé les lettres, et s'étoit surtout appliqué à l'étude des caractères anciens ; comme il remplissoit alors à la cour de Han-ou-ti, un poste distingué, où son mérite l'avoit élevé, il eut recours à ce prince, pour engager, par son autorité, les gens intelligens dans la connoissance des caractères *Ko-teou-ouen*, à se rendre à la cour, afin de l'aider à déchiffrer les livres qu'on avoit recouvrés. Han-ou-ti donna ses ordres en conséquence, et ils attirèrent nombre de lettrés à la cour. Leur première opération fut de collationner les vingt-cinq articles ou livres de

Fou-seng, avec l'exemplaire retrouvé, et on s'assura de la fidélité de la mémoire de Fou-seng; on ne trouva de différence qu'en ce que de vingt-neuf chapitres on livres, il n'en avoit fait que vingt-cinq, comme on l'a dit. Sûrs de ces vingt-neuf chapitres, ils profitèrent des connoissances qu'ils en tirèrent pour examiner le reste de l'exemplaire trouvé, et ils parvinrent à déchiffrer vingt-neuf autres livres, ce qui, avec les vingt-neuf premiers, forma les cinquante-huit livres ou articles dont est composé le *Chu-king*. Cette découverte précieuse pour l'histoire, donna une connoissance suffisante des temps, à compter depuis le règne de Yao jusqu'à l'époque où Confucius a commencé son *Tchun-tsiou*, et dès-lors on conçut l'espérance de rétablir cette ancienne histoire, sinon dans toute sa perfection, du moins par rapport aux faits chronologiques en remontant jusqu'à Fou-hi, le fondateur de l'empire."—*Préface*, pp. viii. . . xiv.

The importance of the wonderful discovery above described, will be at once seen, when it is considered that the Shoo-king gives the history of China from the year B. C. 2357, when Yao mounted the imperial throne, down to B. C. 624; that is,—very a-propos for the prevention of any chasm in the earlier annals of the country,—to a period somewhat later than that at which the narrative of another production of the same author commences. For the Chun-tsew, the recovery of which, however, is not so particularly accounted for, records the transactions of the petty states into which the empire was then divided, and particularly those of the kingdom of Loo, from the year B. C. 722, to the age in which Confucius lived. One might feel at first surprised, why the philosopher should have written the principal historic work ascribed to him, in so very ancient a character, instead of in that called *Tchhouan*, which was, it seems, in use in his time; but the difficulty is cleared up by a circumstance mentioned by the Abbé Grosier respecting this book. "On s'accorde à croire que Confucius, dans l'extrait qu'il nous a donné des annales de chaque dynastie, a transcrit littéralement et copié mot pour mot les propres paroles des grands hommes, dont il rappelle le souvenir; et les plus habiles

critiques chinois ne doutent point, d'après une tradition constante, que les deux premiers chapitres, intitulés *Yao-tiene* et *Chune-tiene*, n'aient été écrits, tels que la Chine les possède, sous les règnes mêmes d'Yao et de Chune."—*De la Chine*, tome iv. pp. 345–6. Of course, as Confucius had to relate the discourses of the ancients in their own words, he was obliged to express those words by the very characters they employed for the purpose; for, it seems, there was just as close a connexion then as there is now, between the verbal and ideographic signs of the Chinese. And thus, it appears, the belief is general in China, and the learned there in particular have not the slightest doubt, that the two oldest of the chapters of the Shoo-king which have been preserved, commencing with events that took place in the years B. C. 2357 and 2255, were found in the recovered copy exactly in the same writing, as that in which they had been composed above two thousand years before the conflagration of books!

For all the circumstances of this recovery, as detailed by P. de Mailla, he has given several Chinese authorities of the highest repute. But no accumulation of authorities can sustain what is in itself absurd. The very ancient characters in which the recovered copy of the Shoo-king is stated to have been written, had become obsolete before the time of Confucius; and between them and the ideagrams in common use upon the restoration of learning, a set of symbols different from either kind was interposed, during some hundreds of years, a period quite long enough to prevent any resemblance or analogy between the separated sets. How then was the old writing to be deciphered? The common account of the matter is, that the operation was accomplished by the help of numerous inscriptions found on antique metal vases. But surely those inscriptions, supposing them genuine, could give only the shapes—already had from this recovered MS.—and not at all the meanings of the ancient symbols. If it be said that the writing being very simple in its formation, and of the primitive kind, its import might be easily ascertained from the mimetic nature of the cha-

racters, the reply is obvious, that, as the text of the Shoo-king is represented to contain discourses of great length and admirable eloquence, the graphic system by means of which these are recorded, could not be so exceedingly simple. Besides, the Egyptian hieroglyphic legends are full of mimetic figures, and yet it is admitted that, if we had no aid to deciphering them, except such as could be derived from the sole examination of the hieroglyphs of which they are composed, we never should be able to penetrate their meaning.

After all, then, to meet the difficulty before us, recourse must be had to the marvellous story about old Fou-seng; and certainly a more clumsy fabrication could not have been contrived for the purpose. Every one must be struck with the extreme improbability of a man above ninety years of age, in the last stage of decrepitude, yet retaining his memory in such perfection as to be able to recollect, word for word, whole chapters of a book which he had not read for sixty years before. To soften down a little this improbability, we are told that it was the practice of the learned then, just as it is at present, to get completely by heart the works of Confucius. But what is here adduced to support the fiction in one point, completely upsets it in another; for, surely, if the Chinese held the writings of their sage in such extraordinary veneration at that time, they would not have submitted, at least without offering some resistance, to see every copy of them destroyed in the flames. It is to be observed also, that there is some inconsistency in the account with respect to Fou-seng's wonderful memory; for though he uttered every word of twenty-nine chapters, he yet compressed them into twenty-five, which he evidently could not have done without dropping the initial or final words of some of the chapters. Let us, however, suppose that he repeated exactly, and without the slightest redundancy or omission, the whole of this portion of the Shoo-king; and let us just consider how his words were to be taken down. It is maintained by the Chinese, that their writing has not in the least altered, during the two thousand years which have elapsed since the restoration

of learning amongst them. The assertion is rather a hazardous one; but as it is confidently made, and its truth is generally admitted, let us look to the immediate consequence of it, in reference to the point under consideration. As the utterance of the old man is represented to have been extremely faint and indistinct, it follows that nothing could possibly be recovered of what fell from his lips, more than the mere articulate sounds,—if even so much,—without any of the gesticulations or niceties of pronunciation, which might have served, in some degree, to restrict their meaning. To pitch on the characters, then, by which the words so arrived at should be read, Tchao-tso had, for each word, to make his choice from a number of symbols that was, on the average, about thirty-three, or the third of a hundred; and, the style of the Shoo-king being exceedingly laconic, and unencumbered with connecting particles, he was not assisted in his selection by the context, or at any rate he was not so assisted in the obscurer sentences with which the work abounds. The chances, therefore, against his writing any such sentence correctly, were above a million to one, if it contained four terms, or forty millions to a unit, if it had five terms, and so on. The story, however, informs us, that the Commissioner of the Board of History wrote every character of the twenty-nine chapters exactly what it ought to be; and the only way in which I can account for the Chinese savans overlooking the glaring absurdity of this part of their fiction, is, that they are in the habit of getting by heart the characters in which the Shoo-king is at present written, as well as the words by which those characters are read; and, consequently, when they hear any part of the one set of signs pronounced, the corresponding part of the other set is at once suggested correctly to their minds. But it is to be recollected, that, from the very circumstances which the tale itself unfolds, our amanuensis could not possibly have been aided, in the performance of his task, by any advantage of this kind; as he came to write out a treatise of which he had never previously seen a single line; and consequently the assertion that, as far as he proceeded in the under-

taking, he executed it without committing any mistake, comes upon us with all the effect of absolute nonsense.

That under the circumstances which have been recorded, Tchao-tso should have written out even the tenth part of the twenty-nine chapters correctly, is extremely improbable; let us, however, for a moment suppose his work half right, in order to see how the problem which Kong-ngan-koué and his learned associates had to solve, would then stand. Whoever has turned his attention to the Rosetta Stone will have some idea of the difficulties which these decipherers had to encounter; but I must add, that they are far greater in the Chinese case than in the Egyptian one. If, among the hieroglyphs still extant on the Egyptian monument, there be some chasms, it is to be recollected that a considerable portion of the imaginary Chinese manuscript is said to have been gnawed away by worms. If part of the Greek version of the hieroglyphs—certainly less than a tenth part—be wanted, it is to be taken into account that the remaining nine-tenths can be securely relied on, as exactly expressive of the meaning of the characters to which they refer; while, on the other hand, even on a supposition that is vastly too favourable, not more than half of the writing of Tchao-tso is entitled to the credit of a like correspondence to its original. In addition to all this, it is to be observed, that the quantity of Chinese writing to be deciphered, amounted to twenty-nine chapters of the Shoo-king, and that of the Egyptian legend only to a small part of a decree which would not, the whole of it, probably be equal to one of those chapters. To such an extent was the Chinese problem, even in its most favourable aspect, more difficult than the Egyptian one; yet, it seems, the literati of China solved the former, so completely as to exclude the possibility of error from every part of the result, and in so short a time that it was not deemed worth while to specify its length; while Europeans have been engaged now for near forty years about the latter, and still have not succeeded in arriving at its perfect solution.

Upon a review of the story of the conflagration of books in

both its parts, I am, I submit, fully warranted in concluding, that, if ever a fabrication supplied materials by which its falsehood could be proved, this one does so. Indeed from the entire range of fiction there scarcely can be produced a tale which exposes more improbability, or more completely refutes itself by its own inherent absurdities. But along with this story must be discarded, as intimately connected therewith, by far the greater portion of Chinese history and chronology, notwithstanding the plausible appearances of minute circumstantiality in the one, and extreme precision in the other. That the system composed of these elements, which is of so very extensive and complicated a nature, should be, up to a comparatively recent period, altogether delusive as to dates, and very nearly so as to names and events, is, I admit, difficult to conceive; and although the fact be nearly certain, it still remains to be accounted for, as its causes are involved in much obscurity. These causes I have endeavoured to develope; and when the outline already presented to the reader is filled up, I am not altogether without hopes of his acquiescing in my view of the subject as just and well-founded.

The channel for the propagation of the delusion in question has, in the foregoing pages, been laid in the ignorance of the Chinese public, and the imperfection of their ancient writing; while its sources may be traced not only to the vain affectation of great antiquity which is common to all nations unacquainted with the real circumstances of their origin, combined with that propensity to falsehood for which the Chinese are so peculiarly distinguished, but also to the prejudices felt by the members of the government, in favour of a system of learning by means of which they have each of them risen to eminence and power, and particularly to their aversion to intercourse with foreigners. Some idea of the strength of this aversion may be had from the consideration of two of its effects,—the rigid exclusion from the interior of the country of European physicians, though highly esteemed by the people, and greatly preferred to their own; and the vexatious obstructions that are thrown in the way of

European commerce, notwithstanding its being productive of so many advantages to China. The principle certainly must act most powerfully on the minds of the mandarins, which surmounts even their desire of health, and love of money.^a Hence the encouragement given by them to their national system of writing, which serves as a wall of separation between their subjects and the rest of the world. But to keep up the credit of this system it was necessary to conceal its grand defect, namely, its failing to supply a record of ancient events; and thus we are led to the motives which induce the government to interfere in the process of compiling the national history, and make it a matter of state policy;—a practice which has prevailed in China as long as any thing respecting that country has been known to Europeans.

But if events have been shifted, in the manner I have represented, so far back into the regions of a fictitious antiquity, how, it may be asked, have the chasms been filled up which must have been thus created, in the parts of the history subsequent to the transferred dates; and whence the materials which are relied on as the groundwork of its antecedent portion? The answer to these questions is, I apprehend, to be found in the liberal rewards offered for the recovery of inscriptions or books of extraordinary antiquity, and in the rich endowment of the Board of History. For, as long as the Chinese public remains ignorant enough to be imposed upon in so gross a manner, and that high prices are paid for relics of a particular kind, it is certain that such relics will be continually forthcoming; and as long as historic commissioners get large salaries, they will be sure to make out work for themselves, in arranging and digesting either the materials thus provided for them, or others of their own manufacture.

^a This powerful principle, I am inclined to think, is to be traced to fear,—the fear, that too free an admission of Europeans into the interior of the country might, by causing a considerable change in the views of the people, lead to a subversion of the government.

Although I here differ from other writers as to the object of the Chinese government in resorting to the two expedients just alluded to, yet all accounts of China agree upon the fact of those expedients having been constantly maintained in operation for a great length of time ; and the reader can easily judge for himself of the motives by which the mandarins are influenced, from the obvious tendency of their measures. P. de Mailla, in the following passage of his preface, states the line of policy under consideration to have been acted upon as early as the imaginary era of the revival of learning in China. “ L’empereur Han-ou-ti, qui estimoit beaucoup les gens de lettres, avoit fait publier un ordre pour rassembler auprès de sa personne les plus habiles gens de l’empire, avec promesse de leur donner de l’emploi et d’avoir soin de leur famille. Ainsi lorsqu’on eut rétabli une partie du *Chu-king*, qui joint au *Tchun-tsiou* et aux commentaires de Tso-kieou-ming sur ce livre, donnoit une si belle partie de l’histoire, il ne désespéra pas de la rétablir entièrement. Pour remplir son dessein, il fit publier, qu’on eût à lui apporter tous les mémoires qu’on en auroit, avec promesse d’une récompense digne de lui.^a Il fit faire des recherches exactes dans les familles dont les ancêtres avoient été employés dans les tribuneaux de l’histoire, et composa une académie des plus habiles gens de ce temps-là en fait d’histoire, où tous ces mémoires furent examinés avec une sévère critique.”—*Préface*, pp. xvi–xvii.

The origin of the Board of History is not, as indeed the quotation itself shows, fixed at the epoch here referred to ; the Chinese would not be satisfied with an antiquity for it extending only two thousand years back ; and if we look into P. de Mailla’s

^a This expedient of offering high rewards for such wonderful recoveries or discoveries was not, it seems, confined solely to the emperor himself ; but was also resorted to by one of the princes of his court, as we are told in the following extract from the same preface. “ Hien-ouang, qui vivoit sous l’empereur Han-ou-ti, étoit un prince passionné pour les sciences, et sour-tout pour l’antiquité ; soins, peines, or, argent, soieries, il n’omit rien pour découvrir ce qui pouvoit subsister encore des anciens, —” *Pref.* p. xxvi.

translation of their Annals, tom. i. p. 19, we shall find it gravely asserted that this tribunal was first established by the Emperor Hoang-ti in the year B. C. 2695, or exactly 4535 years ago! Of the constitution and employment of the Board, as it at present exists, the Abbé Grosier gives the following description: “— le tribunal de l’histoire [est] appelé *hane-line-yuene*. Il est composé des plus beaux génies de l’empire, de ses hommes de lettres les plus profonds. Ils ont subi, avant que d’y être admis, un examen rigoureux. C’est à eux qu’on confie l’éducation de l’héritier du trône, et la rédaction de l’histoire générale de l’empire. Cette dernière fonction les fait redouter de l’empereur lui-même. Ils ont prouvé que le monarque pouvoit les opprimer plutôt que les séduire. Bien plus, l’oppression ou les tentatives de séduction seroient elles-mêmes, malgré lui, consignées dans l’histoire. C’est, le plus souvent, de ce corps qu’on tire les *colao*, ou mandarins de la première classe, et les présidents des tribunaux suprêmes.”—*De la Chine*, tom. v. p. 38. That the members of this committee should be selected from the most able and learned men in the empire is not at all to be wondered at, considering that what they really have to do, is in itself an exceedingly difficult undertaking, and is rendered still more so by the blunders of their predecessors; but that M. Grosier should be so far imposed on by Chinese misrepresentation, as to believe that an absolute monarch would, on a point immediately affecting his own interest and reputation, brook opposition from a board of servile, unprincipled flatterers, totally dependent on his will, or that those flatterers would make the slightest personal sacrifice in the cause of truth, is certainly rather surprising. The Chinese are notorious for their disregard of truth;—a disregard which is carried so far, even among the highest classes, that when detected in falsehood, they show no sense of shame at the exposure. Of this fact Mr. Lindsay has given several instances, in the small work of his to which I have already referred; and, with respect to the nation at large, Dr. Morrison informs us, that “they [the millions of

China] are vastly prone to prevaricate, to deceive, to lie.”—*View of China*, p. 123.

All the accounts of China which allude to the subject, dwell upon the prodigious labours of the Commissioners of History, and the enormous expense to which they put the government; from which it is strangely inferred, that the works they produce must be strictly authentic. Thus M. Grosier, in the essay he has prefixed to P. de Mailla's translation of the Chinese Annals, observes respecting the original: “L'autorité de ces annales est irréfragable à la Chine, et les lettrés de cet empire témoignent pour cette collection une estime qui tient de la vénération. Instruits des mesures scrupuleuses qui ont été prises, sous chaque dynastie, pour la confection de cette grande histoire, également informés des soins, du travail, et des frais immenses qu'elle a coûtés, comme du mérite des grands hommes qui l'ont successivement continuée; à portée d'ailleurs de connoître la critique sévère qui dirige le tribunal de l'histoire dans l'examen de tout ce qu'il approuve, ces lettrés croiroient insulter à la raison, et ne devoir admettre aucun principe de certitude historique, s'ils formoient quelques doutes sur la veracité de ces annales.”—*Discours Prelim.* p. xxii. Notwithstanding the very confident and decided tone of the reasoning in this passage, and the imputation of scepticism hurled against every one who presumes to dissent from it, yet I must say that, from the same premises, I should draw quite a different conclusion from that arrived at by the Abbé and the Chinese savans. For it is to be observed, that the difficulties encountered by the Commissioners are not represented as lying in the process of deciphering ancient records (this would be an acknowledgment of imperfection in their national writing, which the mandarins had no intention of making); but are said to consist in arranging and digesting the contents of those records. But if all that was really wanted, was to deduce from authentic and legible documents at hand, a true and clear account of remote occurrences, neither, as appears to me, would the difficulty of the operation be so great as to require the laborious exertions of numbers of the ablest men in

China, continued without intermission for two thousand years, nor would the government lay out such immense sums of money on an object which could be as well, or perhaps better attained without their interference. The difficulty, therefore, and expenditure in question, instead of supporting the truth of Chinese history, rather bear against it, by affording grounds for suspecting that the occupation of the Historic Board, and the end to which their labours are directed, are very different from what they are represented to be.

P. de Mailla relates an anecdote of a set of historic commissioners who, "once upon a time," were courageous enough to resist the demand of their emperor, to see what they had written about him; and then asks very triumphantly: "Des écrivains de cette trempe ne sont-ils pas dignes de foi, et pourroit-on, sans une partialité ridicule, refuser à leurs mémoires le plus haut degré d'authenticité?"—*Pref.* p. vi. From the manner in which he puts forward this anecdote, I am bound in courtesy to suppose that he believed it himself; but can any unprejudiced person believe it? Assuredly the credibility of Chinese history is not strengthened by its connexion with so very suspicious a story. Still further, he informs us that the materials which are collected during the reign of each emperor for the formation of his history, are deposited, through an aperture made for the purpose, in a closed receptacle, which it is the invariable practice of the Board never to open till after the termination not only of that monarch's reign, but also of all the succeeding reigns of the same dynasty. "Ces historiographes, animés du seul desir de dire la vérité, remarquent avec soin, et écrivent sur une feuille volante, chacun en leur particulier, et sans le communiquer à personne, toutes les choses à mesure qu'elles se passent; ils jettent cette feuille dans un bureau, par une ouverture faite exprès; et afin que la crainte et l'espérance n'y influent en rien, ce bureau ne doit s'ouvrir que quand la famille régnante perd le trône ou s'éteint, et qu'une autre famille lui succède; alors on prend tous ces mémoires particuliers pour en composer l'histoire authentique de l'empire."—*Pref.*

p. iii. The demand here made upon our belief, as to the forbearance of an absolute monarch, is yet more exorbitant than before. Certainly if any one can be imposed upon by the latter statement, he may easily be conceived capable of bringing himself to consider as authentic, the history in support of which it is adduced.

Both statements are not merely on general grounds incredible, but are rendered even more so by the peculiarly inquisitorial nature of the government in China. The administration there is chiefly conducted by boards of commissioners, and at the deliberations of each board is always present a censor, called a *Co-tao*, whose business it is to say nothing, but to watch every thing, and report whatever he may think worth noticing, to the emperor (*De la Chine*, tom. v. pp. 34–35). But is it to be supposed that a sovereign possessed of absolute power, who shows such an eager desire to be minutely informed of all other measures, would yet submit to be kept wholly in the dark as to the proceedings which more particularly concern himself, and the light in which his character is to be transmitted to posterity? In addition to all this, the second statement is pressed by a difficulty, which, exclusively of any other consideration, is sufficient to expose its falsehood. To some of the imperial dynasties a long duration is assigned; for instance, that of the race distinguished by the denomination *Tang* is stated to have lasted 290 years, commencing from the year of our era 618; and it is moreover asserted that the bureau containing the papers from which their history was to be digested, was not opened till about the year 1043. Of this P. de Mailla informs us in the following terms:—"La coutume de ne point faire paroître l'histoire authentique d'une dynastie qu'une autre ne lui ait succédé, et la dynastie des *Tang* ayant occupé le trône près de trois cens ans, firent différer la leur de paroître jusqu'au temps de celle des *Song*. Gin-tsong, quatrième empereur de cette dynastie, qui monta sur le trône l'an 1023 de J. C., fut celui qui en voulut avoir la gloire. Vers le milieu de son règne, il ordonna d'abord à Ouang-yao-tchin, Tchang-fang-pin, &c. de tirer leurs mé-

moires du tribunal de l'histoire, et de travailler à les mettre en état ; —" *Pref.* p. xxxix. Now it is quite impossible that Ouang-yao-tchin, Tchang-fang-pin, &c.—if ever such persons really existed,—could have performed the task here allotted to them. Printing was at the time unknown, consequently the characters changed their shape so rapidly that those which were 400 or even 300 years written, must have been totally illegible ; and a large portion of the papers to be deciphered on the occasion in question exceeded the latter age. Of the mutability of the Chinese characters, particularly before the introduction of the art of printing, more will presently be submitted to the reader ; but I here allude to the fact, in order to point out to his notice the tactics employed by the Chinese savans, in attempting to cover the weakest point in their graphic system by means of effrontery and boldness of assertion. And it appears to be just on the same plan, that they load their pages with such a multiplicity of proper names ;—words which it would be impossible for them to recover from ideographic records as old as they pretend theirs to be, but which they imagine they can safely fabricate ; as there are no legible documents in existence by which the imposition could be detected.

From the abstract which P. de Mailla gives in his preface of the Chinese accounts respecting the labours of the Board of History, very significant hints may be collected as to the true nature of its occupation. These accounts, indeed, which go back to very remote dates, do not by any means prove the existence of the Board at such dates ; but still, as the more ancient labours attributed to it were probably suggested by observation of the manner in which it has for some time past been actually engaged, information on the latter subject may be fairly deduced from a consideration of what is stated upon the former one. Let us, for instance, examine the following passage :—"Les *Koua* de l'*Y-king*, attribués de tout temps à Fou-hi sans la moindre contradiction, l'*Herbier* attribué à Chin-nong, et le traité du *Pouls* de Hoang-ti, ouvrages que Tsin-chi-hoang-ti avoit voulu qu'on épargnât, confirment trop

puissamment que ces princes ont été, pour qu'on les retranchât de l'histoire ; mais on ne les rétablit pas si-tôt, car on s'en tint pendant quelque temps au *Sse-ki* de Sse-ma-tsien, qui ne commençoit son histoire qu'à l'empereur Hoang-ti, et laissoit à d'autres de remonter jusqu'à l'origine de la nation. Ce ne fut que sous le règne de Han-ming-ti, que Pan-piao, chef du tribunal de l'histoire, fut chargé de suppléer à ce qui manquoit à la tête du *Sse-ki*. —." *Pref.* pp. xxv. xxvi. At the commencement of this extract may be observed one of the attempts of the Board of History to soften down the extravagance of the story of the conflagration of books, and get rid of part of the difficulties with which it is embarrassed. The story in question informs us, that Che-whang-te ordered the destruction of all the books relating to the ancient history of China (with the exception, indeed, of those which contained the history of his own family, an exception most probably due to an after-thought of the Board) ; but here, notwithstanding, we are told that he of his own free will spared three, and these, by a singular coincidence, the very records which are specially relied on by the Chinese savans, as proofs of the former existence of the three oldest princes in their history. The proofs referred to are certainly of a very flimsy nature, for there is no unprejudiced person who does not consider the works on which they are made to depend as palpably spurious. They are, however, looked upon by the Chinese, and even by P. de Mailla, as quite convincing ; the obvious intention of the Board being, not to rest the whole authenticity of their ancient history upon relics recovered in very suspicious ways after the alleged conflagration, but to have it, partly at least, supported by documents that never were lost. And the preservation of these, be it observed, is attributed to the express wish of the very individual who is represented as the grand destroyer of all such records.

But the point to which I would more particularly direct attention in the above extract, is the exposure it makes of the retrograde movement practised by the commissioners in extending the antiquity of their history ; till the wider diffusion, through

the Chinese public and among foreigners, of the representations already made upon the subject, together with the improved stability of the means employed for the preservation of those statements, put a stop to this part of the operations of the Board. Sse-ma-tsien is said to have traced the history to a date, one would think, sufficiently remote, as corresponding with the year before our era 2598. We are, however, told that the government were not satisfied with this antiquity, and gave orders for increasing it to Pan-piao, who was President of the Board of History about two hundred years after Se-ma-tsien. Pan-piao is stated to have died while engaged in this undertaking, which, it seems, was completed by Pan-kou, his son and successor at the Board. The account given of Pan-kou is that “—il s’associa Tchín-tsang, Yu-mey, Nong-ki, et autres membres de son tribunal, avec lesquels il fit un examen critique de tout ce qui avoit été fait jusque-là ; suppléa à ce qui manquoit à la tête de l’histoire, et fit quelques légers changemens.”—*Pref.* p. xxvii. Now what I consider here most deserving of notice, is not the addition of three names to the list of emperors, and of 355 years to the antiquity of the empire, but the admission which slips out as to the real occupation of the Board ;—an admission which, we may be certain, falls very far short of the truth, but which, as far as it goes, strongly corroborates the view I have taken of the matter, in endeavouring to account for the manner in which the length of time assigned to the series of events in Chinese history has been so prodigiously extended.

In spite of all the precautions taken by the Chinese savans to conceal the imperfection of their graphic system, something of this imperfection transpires in P. de Mailla’s abstract. For instance, let the following passage be considered : “L’empereur Han-chun-ti, qui monta sur le trône, l’an 144 de l’Ere-chrétienne, n’ignoroit pas combien on avoit été de temps à mettre en état l’histoire des HAN occidentaux. Il y avoit déjà plus de cent ans que ceux de l’orient régnoient ; il craignit qu’en différant de mettre en état les mémoires du tribunal, leur histoire ne fût trop long-temps à paroître, et il donna ordre d’y travailler.

Lieou-tchin, Lieou-y, Lieou-tsao, Fou-vou-ki, et autres membres du tribunal de l'histoire y travaillèrent successivement; mais sans qu'il leur fût permit d'en communiquer avec qui que ce soit du dehors; elle ne fut publiée que du temps des *Tçin* sous le titre de *Han-ki* ou mémoires des *Han*."—*Pref.* p. xxx. Here we have presented to us a description of an emperor of the Han dynasty ordering, in violation of the rule already noticed, the mysterious bureau to be opened, and the history of the earlier sovereigns of his race, who were called the Western Han, to be written; because, forsooth, he was afraid of allowing this operation to be deferred too long. Now, under the circumstances in which he is supposed to have been placed, whence could his apprehensions have arisen? The motive by which he is said to have been influenced, is evidently inadmissible; he must have looked upon a delay in the appearance of the history in question, not with fear, but with hope; as till its publication, or at any rate till, comparatively speaking, a very short time before,^a his family was to remain upon the throne. Neither can it be said that he feared for the safety of the historic bureau; the upholders of the perfect truth of the Chinese Annals would by no means admit that the depository of the papers from which those Annals were digested, was ever after the conflagration exposed to the slightest risk. The only possible ground, then, for the apprehensions of Han-chun-ti, was the danger of the locked-up papers becoming, by length of time, illegible;—a

^a The Commissioners of the Historic Board are represented as taking sometimes ten, and in one instance no less than sixteen years (*Histoire Générale de la Chine*, *Pref.* p. xl.) in digesting the annals of an extinct imperial race; but even the latter period of time is short in comparison with the lengths assigned to most of the Chinese dynasties. As to the possible delay of the publication, after the extinction of his family, to which Han-chun-ti might be supposed to look forward as a consequence of civil wars or other interfering occurrences, those causes would operate equally against a future Board's publishing the history he had got digested, as against its preparing for the public eye papers taken in an undigested state out of the bureau. Such an anticipation therefore, if attributed to him, could supply no motive for his violation of the established rule in question.

danger with respect to Chinese writing in general which, it would appear, so occupied the thoughts of the mandarins, that they unwittingly allowed a hint of it to escape from them in this part of their fabrication.

In P. de Mailla's abstract I shall notice but one circumstance more, as tending to show the real occupation of the Historic Commissioners; namely, the frequent alterations of their work commanded by successive emperors. Thus, respecting the part of the *Annals* alluded to in the last quotation, we are told that, under the emperors of the Tçin dynasty,^a Tchintcheou, President of the Board, was ordered to have it all written over again. "Cette histoire se trouva si mal écrite et avec si peu d'ordre, que Tchintcheou, président des historiens fut chargé de la refaire."—*Pref.* p. xxxi. Again, under the next dynasty, the performance of Tchintcheou was disapproved of, and Song-ouen-ti, one of the emperors of that dynasty, gave directions to have it altered and amended, or in the words of our author, "donna ordre à Pey-song, président de l'histoire, de reprendre ce qu'en avoit écrit Tchintcheou, d'en retrancher ce qui étoit inutile, de corriger le reste et de l'achever."—*Pref.* p. xxxiii. It will probably be attempted to account for the fault found with the former work, by the circumstance of its having been composed before the extinction of

^a There is an apparent contradiction here in P. de Mailla's abstract, for which I am unable to account. He tells us, in the extract quoted in the last paragraph, that the history of the Western Han was not published till the time of the Tçin emperors; it could not, therefore, be found fault with till their time, and, consequently, Tchintcheou could not have been ordered to write it over again till then. Yet, a little further on, we are informed that Tchintcheou's performance was not considered authentic, because it was written before the close of all the reigns of the Han race, "mais comme c'est une loi en Chine qu'une dynastie n'est censée éteinte que lorsqu'il n'en reste plus aucun prince qui porte le titre d'empereur, Tchintcheou, par cette seule raison, perdit sa charge, et son histoire fut dégradée de son authenticité."—*Pref.* p. xxxi. There was, according to the Chinese, a second Han dynasty, called that of the later Han; but the western, the eastern, and the later Han had all run their course before the commencement of the Tçin dynasty.

the whole race of the Han emperors, and while one of those denominated the Eastern Han was yet reigning. But such a position is rather a dangerous one for the defenders of Chinese history to advance; as it implies that Han-chun-ti had some knowledge of what his commissioners were writing. How otherwise could they be influenced by his wishes? But if one emperor could take a peep into the contents of the historic bureau, why might not all the others have equally done so? Besides, there are various instances to which a similar excuse cannot be at all applied. Thus the history of the emperors, distinguished by the name of the Eastern Han, was not written till above two hundred years after the extinction of their dynasty; and yet it was found fault with, and ordered to be altered. “*Les guerres intestines qui s’élevèrent dans la famille impériale des Tchin, après la mort de l’empereur Tchin-ou-ti, retardèrent si fort la deuxième partie de l’histoire des Han, que ce ne fut qu’au commencement des premiers Song, c’est-à-dire, vers l’an 960 de l’Ere chrétienne,^a que Fan-chui l’acheva, encore n’en fut-on pas content. Son travail fut remis à Sie-ching, Siuei-jong, Sse-ma-piao, Lieou-y, King-hoa-kiao, Sie-chin et Yuen-chan-song, sept habiles gens, qui y mirent enfin la dernière main, —*” *Pref.* p. xxxiii. It would be a mere waste of time to enter into any more detailed account of those corrections and emendations; they are, no doubt, put forward by the Chinese in proof of the great accuracy with which their Annals have been written. But may they not fairly be considered, to have quite a different bearing on the subject? If what the commissioners really had to do, was merely to arrange and digest legible materials submitted to their use, in order to the composition of a true history, is it conceivable that a large num-

^a In the body of P. de Mailla’s translation it will be found that it was the second dynasty of the Song emperors which commenced in the year 960; and that the first began in 420. The error in the text is probably one of mere inadvertence; but at any rate a difference of only 540 years is so trifling in Chinese chronology, that it is scarcely worth noticing.

ber of the most able men in China should be continually employed at this task, and yet fail in the execution of it,—fail to such a degree as to render it necessary frequently to alter, and sometimes wholly to undo what they had done? Assuredly the employment assigned to them must be far more difficult, than that in which it is pretended that they are engaged.

I now proceed to the other engine of Chinese policy brought to bear upon this subject; I mean, the offering of high rewards for the recovery of very ancient books or very ancient inscriptions,—an engine which, as well as the former one, has, if we may judge by its immediate effects, been kept in constant play, as far back as any thing has been known of China. Thus M. Abel-Remusat, in speaking of the accumulation which has been made of both kinds of relics, informs us as follows:—"Le zèle et la persévérance des lettrés à rassembler ces restes précieux ne se sont pas relâchés depuis deux mille ans, —" *Memoires de l'Institut., Acad. des Inscrit. et Belles-lettres*, tom. viii. p. 5. That the measure which excites all this zeal and perseverance should have the ulterior tendency of encouraging the fabrication of spurious articles, is obvious; but it remains to be inquired whether an examination of the articles said to be recovered, will bear out and confirm the suspicions which the mode of their production is naturally calculated to engender.

First, then, let us consider the recovered books; and upon two of these, selected as specimens of the class, I shall beg to submit a few observations to the reader's notice. Supposing historic compositions of a prodigious age to be, somehow or other, stumbled upon, it evidently would be very desirable that along with them there should be found a dictionary, and that this dictionary should be, somehow or other, legible. Accordingly, among the numerous volumes for the wonderful recovery of which China is indebted to the zeal and perseverance of her literati, there, most opportunely, is included such a book. Certainly nothing, in a literary point of view, could be more fortunate than the attainment of the work, *if genuine*; and on

the supposition of this proviso being correct, M. Grosier is fully warranted in dwelling on the value of the acquisition, as an important mean for the restoration of the ancient history of China. The following are his words upon this point:—"Il est incontestable qu'un grand nombre d'ouvrages ont échappé à l'incendie des livres. Lorsqu'on commença, l'an 122 avant notre ère, à s'occuper de la restauration de l'histoire, le prince de Ho-kiene étoit déjà parvenu à ressembler plus de cinq mille volumes, et la bibliothèque du prince de Hoai-nane en contenait un nombre à peu près égal. Les cinq *Kin* ou livres canoniques, sept ouvrages de Confucius, deux de Men-tsée, le Dictionnaire *Eulh-ya* furent recouvrés, ainsi qu'un grand nombre d'autres écrits que je pourrois citer, mais dont la nomenclature seroit ici trop longue et peut-être fastidieuse à la plupart de mes lecteurs. Il n'est donc pas vrai que les Chinois aient dû manquer de mémoires et de matériaux, lorsqu'ils entreprirent de restaurer leur histoire."—*De la Chine, discours prelim.* tom. i. p. xliv. Yet our author appears to have afterwards forgotten the prominent rank in which he had here placed the *Eulh-ya*; for in a subsequent part of his treatise on China, where he gives a more particular account of this dictionary, he incautiously exposes enough of its nature to show that it is a mere modern fabrication. Indeed the single circumstance of the work being at present legible, is sufficient to establish it as such; but I am here arguing on positions which are conceded, even by those who maintain the truth of Chinese history. The passage I allude to is thus worded:—"Le dictionnaire *Eulh-ya* est le dernier des livres classiques du second ordre; il est pour les lettrés de la Chine ce que sont aujourd'hui pour nous les lexicographes Hésychius, Suidas et Jule Pollux. Le dictionnaire chinois fixe le sens des mots employés par les anciens, et en détermine la signification précise par des définitions et des explications, qui jouissent d'une grande autorité: ses décisions ne sont cependant pas toujours suivies, et l'on est forcé de s'en écarter sur plusieurs caractères, qu'il explique trop évidemment dans un sens

moderne et inconnu aux anciens.”—*De la Chine*, tom. iv. pp. 354-5.

In the former of the quotations just given we have a tolerable sample of the Chinese talent for amplification, in the statement that ten thousand volumes were recovered at once from the conflagration;—a statement no doubt advanced, after the previous fiction of all books having been utterly destroyed in that catastrophe, was found to be attended with inconvenience. Sir John Falstaff’s expertness in multiplying his men in buckram was nothing to this. However the probability is that, when the desire arose of explaining away the consequences of the first story, there really were a considerable number of works brought forward; and this circumstance clearly shows the actual working of the government measure under consideration. For, as to the nature of the works so produced, there can, I apprehend, be very little doubt; when even the *Eulh-ya*—without which the rest of them could not, if genuine, be understood, and which, on account of its great importance, the Chinese savans rank among the *King* or canonical books—is proved by the admission of those same savans, as may be collected from the latter of the above quotations, to be manifestly a forgery of modern times.

To vindicate the character of the productions said, so inconsistently with the original story, to have been recovered from the flames, M. Grosier, in the dissertation of his prefixed to the French translation of the Chinese Annals, has given an instance of the rejection by the Board of History of a work entitled the *San-fen*, professing to record the events of the three first reigns, or transactions which, it seems, occurred above 4500 years ago; while P. de Mailla in his preface has adduced one or two more such instances. And these rejections of forgeries, too palpable to impose even upon the Chinese public, are relied on as proofs of the extreme accuracy of the Board and the scrupulous strictness with which it scrutinizes the works submitted to its examination. But, obviously, all that can be fairly deduced from the circumstance is, that the Board has grown more cau-

tious than it was at first, as to what it sanctions; while, as respects the true nature of the productions which pass current under its authority, precisely the same opinion must be entertained as I have already inculcated. Undoubtedly, now that the Commissioners of History have acquired more experience, they would, if their business could be done *de novo*, either reject entirely books which they had too unguardedly sanctioned as authentic, or at least prepare them better for public inspection, by expunging the more glaring marks of modernism which had previously escaped their notice. But the evil is now irremediable; the present members of the Board cannot completely remedy the blunders of their predecessors; and the truth will transpire in spite of all their efforts to suppress it. The Eulh-ya dictionary, by the state in which it has been suffered to appear, very decisively supports the correctness of this view of the subject; and more evidence to the same effect is supplied by whole classes of books which were at first passed off as genuine, but have since been found out by the public to be spurious. Respecting these books, the following intimation escapes from M. Grosier:—"Les Chinois forment encore deux autres classes, dans lesquelles ils rangent tous ceux de leurs anciens livres, qu'ils soupçonnent d'altération ou de supposition, et auxquels ils n'accordent qu'une confiance subordonnée à l'examen, mais qu'ils conservent, parce qu'ils y découvrent des traces précieuses de l'antiquité."—*De la Chine*, tom. iv. p. 355.

But, upon this subject, the evidence of particular examples is more convincing than any that can be derived from general descriptions. To supply, then, a second specimen of the forgeries in question, I shall endeavour to exhibit in its true light the Shoo-king, the main foundation of the historic structure erected by the Chinese, and which, for this very reason, is entitled to special attention. I have already exposed the falsehood of the story by which it has been attempted to account for the recovery of this book; and shall now proceed to examine the nature of its contents. One of the most important parts of the narrative relates to the operations by which certain provinces of

China were formerly drained, and so relieved from the evils of an extensive inundation. That at some remote period those operations actually took place, there cannot be the slightest doubt; the remains of the works then executed in order to make sufficient outlets for the waters, are yet extant; and, for their stupendous magnitude, though not for any skill of which they can be said to show traces, are still the admiration of all who have an opportunity of seeing them. But the question is, when and by whom the operations alluded to, were carried on? These are points quite beyond the reach of human power now to ascertain: the account which the Chinese historians affect to give of them, is as follows. A sovereign, named, it seems, Yao, ascended the imperial throne at a date corresponding to the year B. C. 2357; and the above-mentioned dreadful inundation occurred in the sixty-first year of his reign. Koen, the father of Yu, was the first person who was commissioned to draw off the waters; but, though engaged in this attempt for nine years, he was unable to bring it to a successful termination. The son followed in the superintendence of the same undertaking, and, at length, effected the accomplishment of his object, in the eighty-fourth year of Yao's reign, or in the year B. C. 2273. While Yu was thus employed, he had to traverse the whole empire several times; and having in consequence become intimately acquainted with every particular respecting its extent and resources, he was still further commissioned to apportion the amount of taxes to be levied on each district. To forward the execution of this second charge, as well as to give the emperor a more complete view of his draining operations, he drew up a geographic and statistical account of every province of the empire; and the account thus written full 4113 years ago, was, it seems, transcribed by Confucius into the Shoo-king, of which it forms the chapter entitled *Yu-kong*, that is, Yu's tribute.

Of this chapter M. Grosier, in the dissertation prefixed to his treatise on China, gives the following general outline: "— Yu, pour rendre compte à l'empereur des travaux qu'il avoit exécutés pour l'écoulement des eaux, traça lui-même la

description des provinces qu'il avoit si souvent parcourues. Cet écrit, autre monument précieux pour la géographie de ces premiers âges, subsiste encore et forme le chapitre du *Chou-kin* intitulé *Yu-kon*. Tous les lettrés de la Chine le reconnoissent pour un des morceaux les plus respectables de leur ancienne littérature. On ne peut s'empêcher d'y admirer l'exactitude et la précision d'Yu dans la description des lieux. La disposition des provinces, leur circonscription et leurs limites s'y présentent dans le même ordre qu'elles ont aujourd'hui; on y reconnoît le même cours des fleuves et des rivières, la même disposition des montagnes, la même distribution des grands lacs. La plupart même des noms n'ont pas varié, et sont encore aujourd'hui ceux que ces fleuves, ces lacs et ces montagnes portoient alors."—*Discours Prelim.* p. xxvi. Our author, firmly believing the chapter thus described by him, to have been originally written at a period of time 4113 years distant from the present day, very naturally wonders at the geographic names mentioned in it being exactly the same as they are at present;—a point which is equally insisted on by P. de Mailla, in one part of his preface (p. liii.), although in another he acknowledges that the names of the towns in China have been continually changing, and that great confusion has thence arisen in Chinese history. "Les noms des villes de la Chine ne sont pas un des moindres embarras qu'on rencontre en lisant l'histoire, et qui arrête les Chinois aussi bien que les étrangers. Ces noms qui ont changé presque autant de fois qu'il y a eu de nouvelles dynasties, y portent une confusion telle que, sans une attention particulière, on ne soit plus où on en est."—*Pref.* p. lxxi. The circumstance which appeared so very extraordinary to both authors, is certainly not rendered less so, by the additional statement here made by the second. For, where it is admitted that geographic names of one kind have been frequently changed, it is difficult to exclude the lurking suspicion, that the others may also have undergone alteration, though, possibly, at a slower rate; and this inference is strongly supported by the evidence of the Chinese themselves, which, notwithstanding all their cunning,

they have supplied without perceiving its bearing against the authenticity of their principal historic record. The minute details they give of continual successive changes of nomenclature, extend, at all events, to the provinces and departments, as well as to the towns of their country; and the alterations attested by them serve, besides, to show that territorial boundaries have, in the course of time, been shifted in China, as much as in any other part of the world. Their testimony, indeed, upon this subject, is carried back to ages of which, in reality, they have no knowledge; but still must, I conceive, be admitted as valid with respect to later times; whence it may be fairly inferred, that changes of the kind in question went on likewise at earlier periods, although the actual particulars of those changes are now no longer known.

The fact of alterations both of the names of places and of the divisions of territory, having been frequently made in China, was, I believe, first communicated to the European public by P. Martin Martini, in his *Atlas Sinensis*. But much fuller information on the subject, collected from the writings of a great variety of Chinese authors, will be found in an Essay by M. Des Hautesrayes, which he has annexed to P. de Mailla's *Compendium of the Chinese Annals*, and entitled *Nomenclature de tous les anciens et nouveaux Departemens de la Chine, et des principales Villes qui en dépendent*. This Essay, which, on account of the multiplicity of names it enumerates, is extended to the length of 166 quarto pages, commences with the following general observations, which are completely borne out by the subsequent detail:—"S'il est impossible d'entendre les commentaires de César sans une nomenclature qui fasse connoître les anciens noms géographiques des Gaules, et les ramène à ceux qui sont en usage de nos jours, il est encore plus difficile de lire avec fruit l'histoire de la Chine dans laquelle ces noms ont varié autant de fois, pour ainsi dire, qu'on a vu de familles différentes monter sur le trône de cet empire. Non-seulement, les souverains qui ont possédé légitimement ce premier trône de l'Asie, ont usé du droit qu'ils tiennent d'un temps immémorial,

de faire de nouvelles divisions, et de changer les noms des Provinces et des Villes, mais leurs vassaux et ceux qui par la force des armes se sont maintenus dans quelques-unes de leur Provinces ou Départemens se sont arrogés le même droit.—*Hist. Gen. de la Chine*, tom. xii. p. 13.

A few extracts from this Essay will be sufficient for my present purpose. Our author's account of Pé-king is as follows:—
 “La principale Ville du Pé-tché-li, très célèbre en Europe sous le nom de *Péking* ou de *Cour du Nord*, parce que les Empereurs y tiennent leur siège, fut connue dans les premiers tems sous le nom de *Yéou-tou* et de *Yéou-tchéou*. Sous les premiers Tsin elle fut appelée *Chang-kou* et *Yu-yang*; sous les Han, *Kouang-yang* et *Yen-koué*; sous les Tçin et les dynasties suivantes, *Fan-yang*, *Yen-kiun*, *Tcho-kiun*, *Sié-tçin-fou*, *Yen-chan-fou*, *Ta-hing-fou*, *Ta-tou*; au commencement des Ming, *Pé-ping-fou*; enfin sous le regne de Yong-lo, *Chun-tien-fou*, c'est-à-dire, *la Ville qui obéit au Ciel.*—*Nomenclature, &c.* p. 17. Here are sixteen names said to have been borne by Pé-king at different periods, and yet there is not included among them *Khan-balu*,—an appellation by which it is known to have been distinguished in the time of Marco Polo. The description in the same Essay of the successive changes of Nan-king, with respect to the territories in which it has been included, as well as the names by which it has been called, runs thus: “Cette superbe Ville, autrefois le séjour des Empereurs, et que pour cette raison on appelloit *Nan-king*, ou *la cour méridionale*, est bien déchue de ce qu'elle étoit alors, surtout depuis que les six grands tribunaux, qu'elle partageoit avec Pé-king, ont été transférés dans cette dernière Ville, et que les Tartares ont détruit le magnifique Palais et les tombeaux des Empereurs. Cependant on y compte encore plus d'un million d'habitans. Tous les ouvrages qui s'y font, sont plus soignés et plus chers que ceux des autres Provinces. Dans les premiers tems de la Monarchie elle étoit de la Province de *Yang-tcheou*. Elle passa depuis sous la domination des princes tributaires de *Ou*, de *Yuen* et de *Tchéou*. Ces dernières l'appellèrent *Kin-ling*, c'est-à-dire, *Pays d'or*.

Elle porta encore les noms de *Mo-ling*, *Kien-yé*, *Yé-kien*, *Kien-kang*, *Tan-yang-kiun*, *Tsiang-tchéou*, *Yang-tchéou*, *Kiang-ning-kiun*, *Chin-tchéou*, *Kin-ling-fou*, *Kin-kang-kiun*, *Kien-kang-fou*, *Kien-kang-lou*, *Tsié-king-lou*, *Nan-king*, *Yng-ting-fou*.”—pp. 29–30. The following is the account given in like manner of *Si-ngan-fou*, the city in the neighbourhood of which the Sino-Syriac monument was found. “Cette capitale du Chensi, si long-tems la capitale de toute la Chine, et le séjour des Empereurs, étoit, dans les commencemens de la Monarchie, de la Province de *Yang-tchéou*. Le nom de *Si-ngan*, c’est-à-dire, *le repos de l’occident*, qu’elle porte aujourd’hui, lui vient des Ming; on l’appelloit avant, *Koan-tchong*, *Oueï-nan*, *Nui-ssé*, *San-fou*, *Kouan-nui*, *King-tchao*, *Yong-tchéou*, *Yéou-koué*, *Yong-ping*, *Yong-hing*, *Ngan-si-lou*, *Fong-yuen*, *Tçin-tchang*, *Tsin-yuen-lou*, et *Tchang-ngan*.”—p. 68. I shall give but one more extract from the Essay of M. Des Hautesrayes; which I add for the purpose of showing that alterations of both the kinds under consideration have been applied to the subordinate divisions of the empire, as well as to the provinces and territories of the principal cities. The following is the account which he gives, in reference to such alterations, of *Chun-té-fou*, the fifth department of the province of Pé-tché-li: “Ancien département de la Province de *Ki-tchéou*, et qui sous les Tchéou étoit de la Principauté de *Hing-koué*; il passa ensuite sous la domination des Tçin, puis sous celle des Tchao. Sous les Tsin, les Han, les Soui, les Tang, et les Song, il porta successivement les noms *Sin-tou-hien*, *Siang-koué*, *Hing-tchéou*, *Kiu-lou*, *Pao-y*, *Ngan-koué*, et *Sin-té*. Celui de *Chun-té-fou* qu’il porte aujourd’hui lui a été donné par les Ming.”—p. 25.

Now, as potentates have been continually transferring cities and departments from one Chinese province to another, those provinces, it is evident, must, in the course of time, have undergone great changes in extent and boundaries;^a yet they are

^a The testimony of Dr. Morrison on this point should not be here overlooked; it is as follows:—“The Chinese have undergone, perhaps, as many

described in the Shoo-king as very nearly the same in those respects as at present; or, in other words already quoted, “*La disposition des provinces, leur circonscription et leurs limites s’y présentent dans le même ordre qu’elles ont aujourd’hui.*” The Abbé Grosier, indeed, and P. de Mailla do not combine those two circumstances; but overlooking the former, although one that is very generally attested by Chinese authors, they confine their attention to the latter, and see in it a proof only of a most astonishing immutability of things in China. But,—to illustrate the absurdity of such a mode of treating the subject,—suppose these gentlemen had met with *a very ancient* description of any other country—as for instance, of France—in which the names of the rivers, lakes, and mountains were exactly the same as those at present in use, and in which, moreover, the arrangement, extent, and boundaries of the provinces were also the same, would they reason about it in a similar manner? Assuredly they would not; and if their surprise was at all excited, it would be, not by the wonderful permanency of local denominations and divisions in France, but by the extreme simplicity of those who could be imposed on by such a document, or for a moment admit the possibility of its being genuine. A little further consideration will, I hope, place this matter in a still clearer point of view.

The Abbé Grosier, as well as P. de Mailla, states the course of the rivers to be described in the Yu-kong exactly as they now run; yet in a subsequent part of his treatise he informs us respecting the Hoang-ho,—the river which is said chiefly to have caused the inundation removed by Yu,—that it falls into the sea at present six degrees, or three hundred and sixty geographic miles, to the south of its ancient mouth! “*Depuis Yu jusqu’à nos jours, c’est-à-dire, dans l’espace d’environ 3950 ans,*

revolutions as any people on the earth. They have been partially and completely conquered; have delivered themselves, and have been conquered again; *and the divisions of their country have undergone a thousand different changes.*”—*Morrison’s View of China*, p. 61.

le fleuve Hoan-ho s'est tellement écarté de son ancien cours, que son embouchure se trouve aujourd'hui de six degrés plus avancée vers le midi. Il se déchargeoit autrefois dans la mer vers le 40^e degré de latitude ; il s'y jette aujourd'hui à la hauteur d'environ trente-quatre degrés."—*De la Chine*, tom. 1. p. 352. If both statements of our author were true, the inevitable consequence would be, that the Yu-kong is a modern work, as describing not the ancient but the modern course of the Hoang-ho. This argument is conclusive against M. Grosier and those who, like him, rely on the accuracy of Chinese accounts. At the same time I must add, that one of the premises is altogether inadmissible. No unprejudiced person can possibly believe, that such a prodigious change in the channel of the river as that above described, has actually taken place ;—a change which it is not attempted to account for by any convulsion of the earth, or extraordinary exertion of human powers, and which is attributed solely to the slow and silent operation of ordinary natural causes in the progress of time. The statement chiefly deserves notice as serving to show, on the one hand, the credulity of those who trust in the correctness of Chinese narratives, and on the other, the former ignorance of the Chinese as to the geography even of their own country, and the gross blunders they made in astronomical observations, when first they learned from foreigners the mode of determining the relative situations of places by their latitudes and longitudes.

But to proceed in our examination of the contents of the Yu-kong,—P. de Mailla, in one of the letters to M. Freret which are prefixed to his translation of the Chinese Annals, gives the following sketch of the correctness of Yu's geographic descriptions,—of the magnitude of his operations, and the skill displayed in them,—as also of the extent and riches of China in his time. "Yu y [i. e. dans le chapitre Yu-kong] paroît un excellent géomètre, habile sur-tout dans le nivellement des terres, bon physicien, et d'une étendue de génie surprenante. La Chine qu'il parcourut jusqu'à quatre fois, et dont il pré-

senta la description à Yao au retour de son expédition, est un morceau de géographie dont on doit admirer la justesse ; les limites y sont marquées presque telles que nous les avons trouvées lorsque, par ordre de l'empereur Kang-hi, nous avons dressé la carte de cet empire ;^a la disposition des provinces est la même ; les noms et le cours des fleuves et des rivières, les noms et la situation de ses lacs et de quantité de ses montagnes, sont presque les mêmes encore, et tels que nous les avons observés.

“ Mais ce que nous avons le plus admiré, c'est l'habileté avec laquelle il ouvrit des canaux pour conduire les eaux, et les faire décharger dans la mer ; l'adresse qu'il eut de diriger le cours des rivières, depuis leurs sources jusqu'aux fleuves ; les peines qu'il dut prendre pour assurer des lits à ces fleuves, et les empêcher de nuire aux pays qu'ils arrosoient. Le Hoang-ho, de tout temps a été funeste à la Chine, par ses fréquentes inondations auxquelles les provinces de Chan-si, de Chen-si et de Ho-nan étoient les plus exposées. Pour mettre ces provinces à couvert, Yu entreprit de faire passer ce grand fleuve à travers de très-hautes montagnes ; quelles dépenses, quels travaux ne fallut-il pas faire ? Quelle habileté ne devoit pas avoir le grand homme qui réussit dans cette entreprise ? On peut juger de l'immensité de ses travaux, par ce qui en paroît encore aujourd'hui aux montagnes de Long-men, de Hou-keou et à celle de San-men, montagne d'une hauteur extraordinaire dans laquelle Yu ouvrit trois canaux que j'ai vu en travaillant à la carte de la Chine, et dont je demeurai surpris d'admiration et d'étonne-

^a P. de Mailla here betrays an excess of prejudice in admiration of the skill of the ancient Chinese, which is truly astonishing ; and he in consequence draws upon our credulity quite beyond the bounds allowed by common sense. What ! is it to be believed that, if the Chinese could, by their own efforts in former times, or even as late as at the epoch of the arrival of the Jesuits in their country, have determined with any tolerable degree of approach to correctness the relative situations and distances of places, they would have entrusted this important operation to strangers,—to persons against whom they have ever felt a jealousy and even an antipathy of the strongest kind ?

ment. Je vous le demande, Monsieur, cela tient-il de cette barbarie, où, selon vos mémoires, la Chine étoit alors plongée.

“ Suivant cette géographie du *Yu-kong*, l’empire de Yao avoit près de quatre cens lieues d’étendue, est, ouest, et près de trois cens,^a nord et sud. Yu, à la fin de ses travaux, les divisa en neuf grandes provinces, dont il détermina les tributs suivant les connoissances qu’il prit, en physicien, de la nature des terres, de l’habileté et de l’industrie des peuples qui les habitoient.

“ Les tributs dont il fait un détail dans ce même chapitre *Yu-kong*, donnent assez à connoître combien cet empire étoit riche et policé. On voit dans ces tributs de l’or, de l’argent, du fer, de l’acier, du plomb ; des pierres précieuses travaillées et brutes ; des soies crues et mises en œuvre, des pièces de soie blanches, rouges, violettes, rayées, noires, &c. différentes sortes de toiles ; des bois de cyprès, de pin et autres pour la bâtisse des maisons et la construction des barques

“ Si après les terribles ravages de l’inondation, l’empire de Yao se trouvoit si étendu, si riche, si policé, il n’étoit donc pas si barbare ni si nouveau que les auteurs de vos mémoires veulent vous le faire croire. Un empire où on voit tant d’habileté dans les sciences et dans les arts, ne sauroit être passé tout-à-coup de la barbarie, à l’état de la plus parfaite police ; la durée d’une seule génération suffit-elle pour cela ? Enfin Yao peut-il avoir été le premier empereur de la Chine ?”—*Lettre I.* pp. cix–cxi.

To P. de Mailla’s abstract of the contents of the *Yu-kong* I have subjoined the inference he has thence drawn, to show the nature of his reasoning on the subject. Indeed at the very commencement of the abstract he appears to have made a deduction

^a In his preface P. de Mailla states, that, according to the description given in the *Yu-kong*, Yao’s empire extended *six* hundred leagues from north to south. “ Suivant cette description, l’empire de Yao avoit près de quatre cent lieues d’étendue est et ouest, et près de six cent nord et sud.”—p. liv. Whether the inconsistency between the two statements is to be ascribed to P. de Mailla, or traced to his Chinese authorities, I cannot take upon me to determine.

from the chapter which is quite untenable, in ascribing to the Chinese, so early as the imaginary reign of Yao, a proficiency in scientific knowledge and general information which they are very far from having even yet arrived at. The remains of the works which excited the French author's astonishment are, I dare say, as stupendous as he represents them to be; but still those works, like the magnificent Gothic piles erected during the dark ages in Europe, may have been the result of manual labour, directed by that degree of technical skill which can be acquired by mere practice without the aid of science, and so would prove only the density of the population in the engineer's time, and the immense number of labourers at his command. Undoubtedly, however, even the inferior grades of mental attainment thus indicated, together with the extent, the population, the riches, and the luxuries of China at the period when the Yu-kong was written, are quite sufficient to show that the nation must have then been very far removed from its pristine state; and if the reader reflects on the slow rate at which the Chinese improve, even since they have had the aid of European example and instruction, he will perceive that the interval between their first condition and that described by Yu, must have been one of very considerable length. Now, how does P. de Mailla deal with this interval? Does he thence infer that the reign of Yao has been fixed by much too early? Not at all; but still taking it for granted that Yao really ascended the imperial throne in the year B. C. 2357, he follows the Chinese literati, in the retrograde movement by which they extend the duration of the empire yet further backward. In adopting this line of reasoning, he appears to have forgotten that the above date, which he considered as determined with such perfect certainty, is one that precedes the Deluge, according to the present copies of the Hebrew Scriptures, and is only a few centuries subsequent to that event, according to the Septuagint version; and, what is more, he seems to have forgotten that it is, according to his own account, only by seven reigns posterior to the time when the Chinese were sunk in the very lowest stage of

barbarism. The following is his description of the condition of this people just before the reign of Fou-hi, between whom and Yao no more than six emperors are represented to have intervened, and two of the series were brothers. “L’autorité de Confucius, qui a toujours été en si grande veneration, fait remonter l’antiquité de cette monarchie jusqu’à Fou-hi, qu’il fait le premier empereur de la Chine, et qui touche au temps où, au-lieu d’écriture, on se servoit de nœuds de cordelettes, et où les Chinois, sans maisons ni cabanes, ne vivoient que d’herbes et de la chair des animaux, dont ils buvoient le sang, menant une vie barbare, qui tenoit plus de la bête que de l’homme.”^a—*Pref.* pp. 1–li.

The conclusion to which, I submit, plain common sense leads us on the point under discussion, is, that,—as the proper names of places in the Yu-kong are modern; as the arrangement and limits of the provinces in it are modern; as the population and resources of those provinces, and, generally speaking, the information of the people and the progress made by them in the arts, as therein described, are such as they are found in modern times;—the state of things which this chapter of the Shoo-king discloses to us, cannot be very ancient. Still farther, as there is displayed in the work in question such a knowledge of geography as the Chinese do not appear to have had, till after the arrival of the Jesuits among them, I might, perhaps, be warranted in drawing the inference that the Shoo-king was composed subsequently to that period; and that the mandarins had the valuable assistance of those reverend Fathers in preparing this fabrication for the public eye, in like manner as they certainly had it in digesting another one, namely, that which they have imposed upon the world as the Chinese part of the Sino-Syriac inscription. But however this may be, it will, I

^a The observation with which P. de Mailla introduces this passage is worth noticing, as it serves to show the wonderful power which prejudice can exert over the human mind; it is made in the following terms:—“L’histoire authentique de la Chine est sans difficulté, de toutes les histoires prophanes, celle qui nous donne le plus de connoissance et de certitude de l’antiquité des temps.”

apprehend, be at all events admitted by every unprejudiced reader, that, as the state of local denominations and territorial divisions in China, described in the Shoo-king, differs far less from their present state, than does that depicted in the Travels of Marco Polo, the fabrication before us must have been composed later than the celebrated work of this Venetian author. I shall here only add, that the other historic composition ascribed to Confucius appears to be actually the production of his pen, with the exception of the details of eclipses given in insulated passages, which were most probably introduced into the text (to give it a fictitious antiquity) about the period when the Shoo-king was written. In the Chun-tsew the narrative reaches back less than two hundred years before the time of the author; and, although Confucius is not likely to have had the means of knowing, with any degree of certainty, a history of even so short a length, and consequently the earlier part of it cannot be depended on as accurate, yet, excepting the interpolations above referred to, it must, I conceive, be admitted as genuine: the fabricators in after-days of a record bearing his name, would undoubtedly have given a much more extended range of time to the course of events they invented.

I shall now beg to direct attention to the second class of productions that have grown out of the artifice resorted to by the Chinese government in the case under examination. Of the inscriptions recovered in consequence of the rewards offered by this government, and of the zeal thereby created among the literati in China, M. Abel-Rémusat gives the following account: "En même temps [that is, at the time of the revival of learning, after its extinction by Che-whang-te] ou recueilloit de toutes parts, dans les montagnes et les rivières, les vases, les trépieds de bronze, les miroirs de métal, et les inscriptions gravées sur la pierre, qui offroient quelques vestiges des caractères employés sous les dynasties précédentes. Le zèle et la persévérance des lettrés à rassembler ces restes précieux ne se sont pas relâchés depuis deux mille ans, —" *Memoires de l'Institut, Acad. des In-scrip. et Belles-lettres*, tom. viii. p. 5. This general description

of the recovered inscriptions, it may be observed, exactly accords with the supposition of their being forgeries. For it is here said that they were found, not in the conspicuous parts of public edifices,—where it would be difficult to form spurious insculptures without detection,—but upon detached pieces of metal or stone, which easily might in private be moulded into antique forms ; and still further they are stated to have been discovered,—where I admit it cannot be disproved that they actually were got, but where certainly it is most unlikely that pieces of art should be met with,—“dans les montagnes et les rivières.”

While, in constant succession up to the present time, relics of this kind have been brought forward, none are described as got under circumstances such as would place their imputed great age and remote origin beyond the reach of suspicion. Now the extreme paucity in China of inscriptions of undoubted antiquity is a very remarkable fact,^a which in the strongest manner supports the view I have been submitting to my readers of the source from which the tale of the conflagration arose. For the very same desire of concealing the grand defect of their national writing in its older state, which made the Chinese literati secretly destroy their books, as soon as they ceased to be legible, and say they were all burned by Che-whang-te, would also make them destroy such inscriptions in metal or marble as really were ancient. But there is this difference between the two cases, that the latter object could not be so easily effected without detection ; whence it was to be expected that some intimation might transpire of the real agents engaged in its

^a This fact is, I believe, pretty generally admitted by the writers on Chinese literature (though its bearing on the subject does not appear to have been sufficiently considered) ; it is stated, and attempted to be accounted for, in the following manner by P. Cibot, one of the missionaries of Pe-kin. “La persécution de *Tsing-chi-hoang*, les guerres civiles, les grandes révolutions, les incendies, les tremblemens de terre, les inondations subites, &c. ont détruit tous les monumens de la haute antiquité. On ne les connoît guere que par ce qu'en ont dit les ecrivains contemporains.”—*Mémoires, &c. par les Missionnaires de Pékin*, tom. ix. p. 390.

accomplishment. And here, again, the accordance with my explanation of the subject is very striking; for it actually does, in the Annals, come out, that records most highly prized by the Chinese, both for the value of their contents and for the durability of the materials on which they were inscribed, were effaced and broken to pieces by mandarins,—by some of the very persons who, of all others, would be least likely to injure them, *if* they were really legible. But this is the weak point in their system which the savans are most anxious to keep out of sight; and accordingly, while the fact, as to the obliteration of the monuments, and the class to which the obliterators belonged, is admitted, a cause is assigned for it, which there is fully sufficient ground for suspecting to be very different from the true one. Indeed the account attempted to be given of the matter, is so obviously unsatisfactory as to point out quite decisively to the mind, the necessity of looking elsewhere in search of a correct explanation.

In the Memoirs written by the Missionaries of Pe-kin, some notice of marble tables, filled with inscriptions, and said to have been erected about two thousand years ago, is extracted from the Chinese Annals; and allusion is made to the accounts given by travellers of the remains of the writing on those tables, from which it may be collected that the characters therein still distinguishable, are wholly different from those at present in use,^a and consequently form part of a text which, even if unmutilated, would be now quite illegible. “Il est parlé dans les Annales de plusieurs *Péi*, ou grandes Tables de marbre chargées d’inscriptions écrites en caractères tout différens les uns des autres. Elles avoient été élevées sur la fin des *Tcheou*. A en croire les voyageurs, qui en ont vu les restes, les écritures en sont si différentes, qu’on ne voit pas même d’analogie entre elles.”—

^a If these characters had any discoverable analogy to modern ones, they would necessarily have some to each other. It is only the latter kind of analogy that is, according to the next quotation in the text, denied to them by the travellers; but thence I apprehend, the inference is fairly deducible that the former kind must equally have been wanting.

Mémoires, &c. par les Missionnaires de Pékin, tom. i. p. 26. What the true age of those tables may be, it is impossible now to determine; but, even supposing them as old as is here asserted, it is not very likely that such hard materials could be worn away in the course of the assigned period, merely through the process of decay occasioned by time. Their mutilation most probably is in a great measure due to human agency; but no clue is here given to assist us in identifying the mutilators; and the passage is chiefly worth attention, on account of its affording us some insight into the nature of the ancient Chinese writing.

P. de Mailla's translation of the *Annals*, however, will enable us to bring home to the real delinquents an offence of the kind in question. The following account is thence taken, of the erection of marble tables on which the *King* were inscribed, in the year of the Christian era 175, and of the circumstance that gave rise to this proceeding. "Han-ling-ti trop susceptible et trop peu en garde contre ces rapports insidieux, fit arrêter Lieou-koué, qu'il obligea de se donner lui-même la mort. Il fit encore exécuter publiquement plus de cent personnes de sa suite, afin de manifester qu'il n'accorderoit aucun pardon à ceux qui auroient participé à la prétendue conspiration des lettrés L'empereur ne voulant pas s'attirer la réputation d'ennemi des sciences, auxquelles la perte de tant d'habiles gens devoit nécessairement être fatale, ordonna à Tsai-yong de faire graver sur quarante-six pierres les soixante *King* en cinq sortes de caractères, connus sous les noms de *Ta-tchuen*, de *Siao-tchuen*, de *Li-chu*, de *Kiaï-chu*, et de *Ko-téou-ouen*, en choisissant de ces derniers ce qui avoit été en usage sous les trois premières dynasties des *Hia*, des *Chang* et des *Tchéou*, parmi les soixante et dix sortes de caractères dont on se servoit dans ces premiers temps, et dont on n'avoit presque plus de connoissance.^a Ces

^a The tendency of the Chinese to indulge in exaggeration is here tolerably exemplified. So it seems that, four thousand years ago, there were made use of, in their country, no less than seventy different kinds of writing! The sentence is further worth notice, for the hint which the Historic Commissioners allow in it to escape from them, respecting the present illegibility of ancient Chinese writing.

quarante-six tables furent élevées sur des piédestaux de marbre au devant de la porte du midi du collège impérial, afin qu'étant continuellement exposées à la vue du public, les jeunes gens fussent excités à s'instruire es *King* et à acquérir la connoissance de ces différens caractères qu'il vouloit par-là transmettre à la postérité."—*Histoire Générale de la Chine*, tom. iii. pp. 498-9.

The destruction of these tables is stated in the same work to have taken place in the year of our era 518; and the persons engaged in the proceeding, as well as the motive by which they were actuated, are described as follows:—"Les quarante-six tables de marbre, sur lesquelles l'empereur Ling-ti, de la dynastie des *Han*, avoit fait graver les *King* en trois sortes de caractères,^a existoient encore dans leur entier à Lo-yang; elles avoient été gravées avec tant de soin, qu'elles s'étoient conservées sans aucune altération. Mais deux mandarins de Lo-yang, Fong-hi et Tchang-pé, que la princesse Hou-chi avoit chargés de l'inspection sur le temple de *Foé* qu'elle faisoit élever, les mirent en pièces pour s'en servir dans la construction de ce temple. Toui-kouang, administrateur du collège impérial, y envoya un de ses officiers, et sur son rapport, il présenta un placet à la princesse, pour lui demander d'ordonner à Li-yu d'en prendre les pièces et de les rétablir. La princesse y donna son consentement. Cependant il n'y eut rien d'exécuté à cet égard."—*Histoire Générale de la Chine*, tom. v. pp. 242-3. Here it is expressly and unequivocally admitted, that historic records of great value, and in the highest state of preservation, were destroyed by mandarins,—by individuals of a class who are always represented as the most ardent lovers and admirers of the ancient literature of their country. It is added, indeed, that one of the class objected to the proceeding; that is, he looked on quietly till after

^a In the account given of those tables in the preceding extract, the *King* are said to have been engraved on them in *five* different kinds of characters; but in an entire tissue of fabrications it is not to be expected that consistency could be always preserved.

the mischief was effected, and then made his remonstrance. But obviously this was done, or mention of its having been done was inserted in the Annals, merely with the view to saving appearances. That no serious opposition was given to the mutilation, but that, on the contrary, it was carried on with the full concurrence of the entire class, is evident from the circumstance that, although permission to repair the damage committed was asked and obtained, yet that permission was never acted on;—the Historic Commissioners could not say it was; because, then, they would have had to answer the question, if the tables were repaired, where are they now?

On the supposition of the records insculped upon those tables being legible, the act of the mandarins in having them obliterated, is wholly inexplicable; and, accordingly, the reason which is assigned for it, is in the last degree inadequate and futile. They had the tables broken in pieces, it is said, in order to make use of the fragments in the erection of a temple for the god Fo. Could they get no other materials for the purpose? If not; could not they have had these so employed as to have the inscriptions still uninjured and placed conspicuously within the public view? If it can be imagined that neither way of preserving the contents of the tables was practicable, still is it to be believed that mandarins, that is, followers of Confucius,—who are nearly indifferent to all sorts of religion, but show an especial contempt for such as come from abroad,—would sacrifice native records of the highest interest in honour of a foreign deity?^a But let the above hypothesis be reversed; let it be supposed that the records in question, though in a perfect state of preservation, had become quite illegible; and then the conduct of the mandarins can be easily accounted for upon intelligible grounds, in the manner I have already suggested.

^a The contempt of the Chinese government for Bûddhism is strongly illustrated by the following extract from Du Halde:—"Il y eut un tems où le cuivre manqua de telle sorte, que l'empereur fit détruire près de 1400 temples de Fo, et fit fondre toutes les idoles de cuivre pour en faire de la monnoye."—Tom. ii. p. 167.

Should it be here asked, why more instances of these mutilations do not occur in Chinese history? the objection thus put to my view of the subject may, I conceive, be easily met. In the first place, there has been less occasion for any such mutilation, since the writing of the Chinese has, through the improvements derived from external sources, and through the aid of collateral alphabetic records, become more permanently legible. And in the second place, with respect to the documents previously written, the wonder, as I conceive, is not, that more instances of their destruction by the mandarins have not been inserted in the Annals, but that any one such instance should be there found recorded. The probability is that, when the Historic Board allowed a place in their narrative to the transaction in question, it was too fresh in the memory of the people to be altogether suppressed; and it was thought better to try and advance some colourable pretext for conduct which could not be entirely withdrawn from the public view. But if they had now the power of correcting their former blunders, and remodelling their Annals, they surely would not suffer to appear in them a fact which has so strong a tendency to expose what they are most anxious to keep secret—the absolute illegibility of their ancient writing, and their consequent total ignorance of the ancient history of their country.

Notwithstanding the pains which have been taken to destroy such documents as exhibited specimens of really old Chinese writing, and thereby remove the direct evidence of its being at present illegible, yet there still remains of it enough in existence to establish this point, independently of the proof to the same effect which has been above deduced from the conduct of the mandarins. I have already given an extract from the first volume of the tracts written by the Missionaries of Pe-kin, in which allusion is made to remnants of Chinese inscriptions in marble, sufficiently visible to show that the writing they belonged to, must have been wholly different from that now in use; and I shall here add another from M. Hager's description of the monument of Yu, in which he mentions certain records

that can no longer be read, and yet are still preserved, but kept in a situation where probably they are not very accessible to vulgar eyes. “Il est vrai qu’on voit encore aujourd’hui, dans la province de *Chang-tung*, sur la montagne du sacrifice oriental, soixante et douze inscriptions gravées sur autant de tables de marbre, dont les caracteres de l’une sont absolument différents de ceux de l’autre ; car il y a eu un temps pendant lequel plus de soixante-dix sortes différentes de caracteres étoient en usage à la Chine. Mais aussi n’y a-t-il personne aujourd’hui qui puisse les lire entièrement, bien moins les entendre ;—” *Monument de Yu*, p. 10.

But of the few Chinese inscriptions which present indications of real antiquity, and yet, some way or other, have not in consequence been mutilated, by far the most remarkable one, and that to which the Chinese themselves seem to attach most importance, is the assemblage of antique characters which is called the Monument of Yu. This record (which escaped the vigilance of the Historic Commissioners, in times when they might have effaced it with less danger of exciting the suspicion of the public, than they would now incur by such an act ; and which they appear to have been, on that account, compelled since to deal with in a different manner) may, I conceive, be admitted to be very old, though by no means as old as is pretended ; but I must add, that it is utterly illegible, or, at any rate, it was so about sixty years ago,^a when no tampering with it had as yet been attempted. The illegibility of this document, which has so powerful a bearing on the subject under discussion, is spoken of as quite notorious, by a very learned and ingenious writer, P. Cibot, one of the missionaries of Pe-kin, who, from the opportunities he had of acquiring information, can hardly be supposed to have been mistaken as to the fact ; though probably there are but few who would be inclined to acquiesce in the cause to

^a The article from which the testimony that follows in the text, is extracted, most probably was written before 1780, but not later ; as in that year the death of its author took place.

which he ascribed it. Such of the characters as were not effaced by time, must, according to his account of the matter, have had their shapes altered by the irregular growth of the rock on which they were insculped ! Here are his words : “ On voit encore près de la source du fleuve Jaune une apparence d’inscription, gravée sur le rocher percé dans lequel Yu le fit entrer. Soit que le tems l’ait effacée, soit que le rocher en croissant en ait altéré les caractères, on ne peut plus la lire. La tradition universelle en fait honneur à Yu, —” *Mémoires, &c. par les Missionnaires de Pékin*, tom. viii. p. 192.

The whimsicality of P. Cibot’s reasoning on the illegibility of the inscription attributed to Yu, affords no ground for rejecting his evidence as to the fact; though certainly the force of it is weakened, by the circumstance of its having been given only from hearsay, as well as by that of his accuracy upon another point,—the situation he has assigned to the monument,—having been called in question.^a M. Hager, in his description of this same monument, asserts, that the place it originally occupied was on the *Heng-chan*, one of the mountains from which the Chinese emperors are in the habit of offering sacrifices to their gods, on a rock of which mountain its characters were insculped; and that it was subsequently thence cut off and conveyed to *Si-gan-fou*, capital of the province of *Chen-si*, where it has since remained. But whatever deductions should be made from the value of P. Cibot’s testimony, are amply compensated, by information supplied through means of the discovery of an original

^a It is but justice to P. Cibot to observe, that, if the account he has given of the original site of the monument be erroneous, he was not singular in his mistake. The Abbé Grosier held the same opinion on this subject; as appears from the following passage of his treatise on China : “ Les plus anciennes inscriptions de la Chine sont toutes en chinois, même celle que Yu fit graver sur un rocher, près de la source du fleuve Jaune, lorsque Yao le chargea d’en diriger le cours.”—*De la Chine*, tom. vi. p. 3. From the want of agreement upon the point between authors, I think there is reason to suspect, that the mandarins purposely misled Europeans as to the place of this record, in order to exclude them, as long as possible, from an inspection of the writing it displays.

MS. of a learned cotemporary writer, P. Amiot, which brings the matter more immediately under observation. This MS. (which forms the basis of M. Hager's publication in the year 1802; and was found by him in the National Library in Paris, after he had previously met with a copy of the inscription to which it relates, in a work printed in Japan) is described in his *Avant-propos* as follows:—"Ce manuscrit renferme non seulement la même inscription en grands et beaux caracteres peints à la Chine, qui confirme l'authenticité de la mienne; mais encore (ce qui m'a paru beaucoup plus intéressant) ces mêmes-caracteres, impossibles à déchiffrer pour quelque Européen que ce soit, traduits par des antiquaires chinois en caracteres modernes, et expliqués par le P. Amiot en langue française."—*Monument de Yu*, p. 2.

M. Hager's work contains, besides other matters, the three documents just spoken of: 1°. the old series, consisting of seventy-seven antique characters; 2°. the new series, which, it is pretended, corresponds exactly in meaning, character for character, with the old one, and of course contains the same number of terms; and, 3°. the French translation. However correctly the third document may have been drawn up, it is of no use in the present inquiry, as it exhibits the meaning only of the second; but the second is highly interesting, and affords, I apprehend, very sufficient positive evidence of the utter failure of the Chinese attempt to decipher the first. P. Amiot, indeed, and his editor would appear, on the authority of the antiquarians above-mentioned, to have given the modern legend as equivalent in meaning to the ancient one; but surely the assertion of the Chinese is not to be acquiesced in, unless, in support of it, there can be shown some connexion in shape between the characters which are said to have the same signification. The necessity of this requisite is admitted by M. Hager, who, in consequence of its absence in the present instance, expresses strong doubts of the veracity of the antiquarians; and must, therefore, be considered as not going the length of positively vouching for the correctness of their translation, but only

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as submitting it to inspection, in order to afford the public an opportunity of forming their own judgment on the subject. The following are his words :—" Le peu de ressemblance qui existe entre les traits de notre inscription et les autres caracteres chinois, donne lieu de soupçonner la véracité de la traduction faite par les antiquaires chinois On seroit tenté de leur demander comment ils ont été en état de déchiffrer des groupes absolument différents de tout ce qui nous reste aujourd'hui, —" *Monument de Yu*, p. 9.

To satisfy the reader of the total dissimilarity of the characters which are said to be equivalent, I have had the first five of the modern series and of the older one in two states (as it appears on the stone, and as the Chinese antiquarians affect to amend and restore its elements to their pristine form) copied out carefully from M. Hager's publication, with no other difference than that the ancient symbols are reduced in size, to bring so many of them within a moderate space. They may be seen in the opposite Plate numbered VII.; where the restored figures are placed in the intermediate column, and those which are intended to match, stand respectively in the same horizontal line. Of the ancient and modern characters thus compared, it may be safely asserted, that no corresponding ones in the two entire series are less unlike each other, while many of them are more so. The produced specimens, therefore, are by no means calculated to give an exaggerated notion of the want of connexion in shape, between symbols assumed to have the same meaning, which runs through the whole of the two legends. Now I do not at all assert that equivalent ideagrams may not be very differently shaped; but it must, I submit, be conceded, that, where the signification of one set is unknown, and to be discovered through another set, that discovery can be made only by means of some analogy, in form and composition, between the corresponding figures of the two sets. With respect to the case at present more immediately under consideration;—if there had been any approach to resemblance in the compared symbols, it might be suspected that a practised eye could detect a connexion

between their forms, though invisible to one less familiar with the subject; but the difference here is too great to admit of the possibility of this supposition being realized. Neither, as I conceive, is it necessary in order to the reader's arriving at a conviction of the failure of the Chinese attempt, that he should be acquainted with all the different kinds of Chinese characters; because he may be certain that, if there were a discoverable connexion between the antique figures and any sort of characters whose meaning is known, it is in that sort the antiquarians would have given their explanatory series.

It may, however, be added *ex abundanti*, that not only are the antique groups in question wholly unlike the modern ones by which it has been attempted to represent them, but also that there is no discoverable affinity in form between them and any known species of Chinese characters; and as M. Hager, who appears to have devoted considerable attention to the several varieties of those that are legible, is very clear on this point, I shall give his statement at full length. “Quant à la forme de ces caracteres, elle est extraordinaire et même unique; car elle n'a aucun rapport avec les plus anciens caracteres chinois que nous connoissions; elle n'en a pas avec les trigrammes de *Fo-hi*, publiés dans les mémoires des missionnaires de *Pekin*, et dans différents autres ouvrages, ni avec les caracteres appelés *Kou-ven*,^a dont quelques uns se trouvent gravés dans les *Transactions philosophiques*, et dont la bibliothèque nationale possède la collection, ni enfin avec les caracteres anciens appelés *Tchouen-tsu*, dont nous donnons ici trente-deux différentes especes, et dont

^a The characters here named *Kou-ven* are thus defined by the Abbé Grosier:—“La première [sorte d'écriture] se nomme *kou-ouene*; c'est la plus ancienne, et il n'en reste presque aucun vestige.”—*De la Chine*, tom. vi. p. 14. From this account of them it follows, that they are the same as those which M. Abel-Remusat, in the extract which shall presently be given from his grammar, describes under the appellation of *Kho-teou*. In passages already quoted from P. de Mailla's translation of the Annals they are styled *Ko-teou-ouen*, under which fuller denomination the names here specified would appear to rank as different parts of the same combination.

on peut voir toutes les variations qu'ils ont subies dans les dictionnaires chinois (*Tchouen-tsu-luy*, *Tching-tsu-tong*, &c.) ; moins encore avec les caracteres modernes, qui sont composés de deux cents quatorze éléments, qu'on appelle clefs, et dont aucun ne se voit dans l'inscription de *Heng-chan*. Mais ce qui nous paroît plus remarquable encore, c'est que le *College impérial de Peking* possède des monuments gravés sur des pierres ; ces monuments représentent les différentes écritures qui ont eu cours depuis *Tsang-hié* [ministre de *Hoang-ti*], a qui l'on attribue l'invention des caracteres ; parmi ces écritures se trouvent celles qui étoient en usage du temps de *Hia-Yu* (*Yu* est appelé *Hia-Yu*, parce qu'il a été le fondateur de la famille impériale appelée *Hia*) : or ni les caracteres de *Tsang-hié*, ni ceux de *Yu* ou de ses successeurs, n'ont la moindre ressemblance avec notre inscription, comme on peut s'en convaincre par la représentation exacte qu'on en donne ici."—*Monument de Yu*, pp. 8, 9.

One would suppose that this statement,—which forms a very prominent part of the observations M. Hager has prefixed to his engravings,—was sufficiently explicit to prevent the possibility of its purport being mistaken ; yet, strange to say, M. Abel-Remusat has referred to the very work from which it has been extracted, as well as to two others, in proof of the characters in the inscription attributed to Yu, having a close analogy to those belonging to a species of Chinese writing that is legible, notwithstanding its apparent antiquity ;—a species which is, in the beginning of the extract just presented to the reader, specially excluded from any such analogy ! The eleventh article of his grammar runs thus : “ 11. * * *khô-teou* est la plus ancienne espèce d'écriture, suivant les Chinois. On lui donne ce nom, qui signifie têtards, parce que les traits irréguliers dont elle étoit formée, donnoient l'idée de cet animal. On dit que *Fou-hi* (vers 2950 avant J. C.) l'inventa pour remplacer les cordelettes nouées. Cette écriture est maintenant inusitée. L'inscription de *Iu* (xxiii^e. siècle avant notre ère) offre des caractères qui ont beaucoup d'analogie avec le *khô-teou*.” And his note of refe-

rence on the concluding sentence of the article is as follows:—
“*Encycl. jap.* l. xiv. p. 30.—*Monument de Yu*, par Hager ; Paris, 1802, *in-folio*.—*Inscription des Yu*, von Julius von Klaproth; Berlin, 1811, *in-quarto*, p. 14.” This instance of unfairness tells little in favour of the cause in support of which it is employed ; and corresponds more with the knavery of the Chinese themselves, than with the conduct which might be expected from an educated European.

As I have not seen the German work just referred to, I cannot be certain but that it may be as much misrepresented as the French one. I am, however, quite ready to admit the probability that this is not the case, when I consider that the general tendency of M. Klaproth's writings on the subject of Chinese literature is to uphold its perfections, and laud it in a very extravagant manner. But even granting that the *Inscription des Yu* exhibits the characters in question as analogous in shape to a known species, and consequently as legible, surely this work cannot supersede the authority of the Missionary's MS. ; which gives drawings more to be depended on for correctness, inasmuch as they were taken from the monument at an earlier period ; besides that they are above all suspicion of having been tampered with by the author who transmitted them to Europe, as they make directly against the view of the matter which he advocated. The German publication, therefore, by its supposed bearing on the point under discussion, would merely prove that some fraudulent alteration had been effected either in the original inscription, or at least in the copies taken from it, since the time of P. Amiot ; and thus expose one of the many artifices resorted to by the Chinese savans, to conceal the defects of their graphic system.

The extract I have given from M. Hager deserves attention in another respect also, in its latter part ; which serves strongly to confirm the suspicion that the relics produced in consequence of the large rewards offered for their discovery, are mere fabrications. For when the inscriptions upon those put forward by the Royal College of Peking to exhibit the variations of the

characters which took place in the successive ages of remote antiquity, were brought by our author to the test of a comparison with writing that was really old, they were found not to have, any of them, the slightest analogy therewith. The circumstance very naturally appeared astonishing to M. Hager, because it never occurred to him to suspect the genuineness of those relics; but if we suppose them spurious, the difficulty which perplexed him, is at once removed. The information with which he has supplied us on this point is very interesting; and is just such as might be expected from an honest observer, who tells what he has noticed, although he is unable to account for it.

From the inscriptions, I again turn to the books of the Chinese; and have to observe, that even their modern writing can be made to yield support to the correctness of the views just presented to the reader, whenever there can be found, printed in this character, works that have gone out of use for any considerable length of time. The Chinese treatises on astronomy, for instance, have fallen entirely into disrepute since the early part of the reign of the Emperor Kang-he; and of these it can be shown, first, that, in little more than half a century after, they were beginning to be illegible; secondly, that there are some traces of efforts secretly made by the mandarins within that interval to get them destroyed; and thirdly, that copies of them thenceforward became exceedingly scarce. Evidence bearing, as I conceive, very strongly upon those points, can be adduced from letters of P. Gaubil to P. Souciet, of which a digest is given in the preface to the History of Chinese Astronomy, composed by the former writer, and edited by the latter. In reference to the first point, P. Gaubil expresses himself as follows:—" Dans ces calculs, me dit le P. Gaubil, après bien du travail on trouve souvent qu'on étoit dans des idées fausses, et il arrive plus d'une fois, qu'au bout de sept ou huit jours passés à calculer des nombres énigmatiquement exprimés, ou à déchiffrer trois ou quatre caractères qui paroissent ne faire aucun sens, on s'estime heureux d'apprendre l'expression d'une

année particulière, ou d'un jour déterminé, ou d'un autre point exprimé ailleurs d'une manière différente, et qui à son tour coûtera deux ou trois fois plus de peine à débrouïller."—*Observations, &c. publiées par le P. Souciet, Pref. tom. ii. p. xv.* Here the learned author admits that it sometimes took him seven or eight days to make out the separate meanings of three or four characters, and then two or three times as long to get at the sense of the passage in which they occurred. The difficulty of such deciphering may be compared with that which Halley encountered, in translating an Arabic version of the treatise of Apollonius *de sectione rationis*, without any previous knowledge of the Arabic writing or language. There is, however, this difference between the two cases, which tends to show that the Chinese problem was the more difficult one; namely, that the English astronomer completely succeeded in the solution of that to which he applied himself, while the French author candidly acknowledges his partial failure in the other. The admission of the latter to this effect is made in the same place, as follows:—
 “Après tout, tant de difficultés, m'écrit encore le P. Gaubil, et beaucoup d'autres, dont je vous parle dans mes lettres, font aisément juger, qu'il y a bien des chûses dans l'astronomie chinoise que je n'ai pas entendues; je l'avouë.”—*Préface, p. xvi.* But he excuses his failure by informing us, that *the Chinese themselves frequently do not understand the meaning of even a single sentence in their ancient books.* This very remarkable disclosure escapes from him in the following passage:—“Outre la peine des les déchiffrer, j'ai eu, dit le P. Gaubil, à éviter le fatras et la confusion dans l'ordre des matières; les livres dont j'ai tiré tout ce que je donne, sont écrits d'une manière toute extraordinaire: malgré l'attention que j'ai eue à tout éclaircir, à tout expliquer, je pourrai bien encore être obscur en bien des endroits. Je ne saurois qu'y faire; ce défaut pourroit bien venir de ce que quelquefois je n'ai pas bien conçu les chûses: cela n'est pas surprenant: *les Chinois eux-mêmes ne comprennent souvent rien à leurs anciens livres.*”—*Préface, p. xxii.*
 Surely nothing could possibly be stronger in support of my re-

presentation of the subject than the foregoing remarks; particularly when it is considered that they were made by a Chinese scholar of the highest order, but who had not himself the slightest suspicion of their bearing on the general nature of the Chinese writing. As the books which he found such difficulty in reading, were printed, it is not likely that they were, any of them, in his day—no matter what the dates attached to them might be,—above two hundred years old. How totally illegible, therefore, must not Chinese works be, that were written four centuries ago, and have ceased to be consulted even half that length of time; if any such have been suffered to remain extant in China.

Upon the second and third points adverted to, it will be sufficient to quote the observations put forward by P. Souciet in the same place. “Mais la difficulté d’entendre les livres chinois d’astronomie n’est pas la seule : celle de les avoir est presque aussi grande, et quelquefois plus insurmontable : on en verra la preuve dans cette Ouvrage, et l’on remarquera plus d’une fois la peine que l’Auteur a eue à recouvrer quelques-uns des livres dont il rend compte, et quelque diligence qu’il ait dû faire, il n’a pût en déterrer d’autres qu’il auroit bien souhaité pour la perfection de celui-ci. Les livres qui traitent de l’ancienne astronomie chinoise sont fort rares à la Chine ; Ils (les Jésuites) avoient ramassé plusieurs livres sur cette matière, mais la plupart furent pillés ou brûlés durant la persécution de *Yam-quam-t sien*.”^a—*Préf.* pp. ii–iii. Upon the concluding sentence of this passage it may be remarked, that, if the Chinese had burned the European books in the possession of the Jesuits, the act might very naturally be laid to the score of national prejudice. But how can we possibly account for the greatest admirers of all that is old in their country, destroying the works

^a This name is written in P. de Mailla’s translation of the Chinese Annals, Yang-kouang-sien. The persecution he excited against Europeans and the Christian religion, was a few years after the death of the Emperor Chun-tchi, the predecessor of Kang-he, in the year of our era 1664.

of their own ancient authors, except upon the ground which I have assigned for this proceeding?

To the evidence which has now been extracted from the statements of two very learned Jesuits, may be added that, of like tendency, which is supplied by a third. In an essay written by P. Cibot, there occurs the following passage:—"Je m'étois proposé d'abord de donner les images et symboles élémentaires, tels qu'ils étoient dans l'antiquité; mais mes recherches m'ont appris, 1°. qu'il y en a plusieurs dont on n'a pas conservé les anciens caracteres; 2°. que plusieurs ont été écrits par les anciens de différentes manieres, et qu'on ne peut plus décider quelle est celle qui touche de plus près à leur origine; 3°. que les antiquaires ne sont pas d'accord sur leur nombre, ni même assez sur ce que représentent quelques-uns."—*Mémoires, &c. par les Missionnaires de Pékin*, tom. ix. p. 365. We have here the admission of a very able Chinese scholar, that, when he wrote, it was no longer possible to analyze the meaning of certain characters; which he, indeed, in reliance on the assertions of the mandarins, supposed to be of great age, but which, as far as they were found by him in print (for he does confine his description to those insculped upon stone), could not be extremely old. Thus it appears, from the testimony of witnesses who certainly were not led by their prejudices to give it to this effect, that, while the inscriptions of the Chinese upon monuments of real antiquity are absolutely and totally illegible, the writing in such of their books as have fallen into neglect, approaches more or less to a state of illegibility; the difficulty of reading those books being of course proportioned to their age, and the time they have been out of use.

Of the coins of the Chinese, as having the same bearing on the subject under discussion as their inscriptions in marble and their books, some notice must here be taken. Those coins are very confidently referred to, as if they corroborated the accounts given in Chinese history; and collections of them are said to be extant, in which one at least is shown for every reign since that of Hoang-ti, who, it seems, introduced the use of money

in commerce above 4440 years ago (*Histoire Générale de la Chine*, tom. i. p. 25). That the mandarins should exhibit complete collections of this kind, is by no means unlikely;^a such a line of proceeding would be just of a piece with their policy in producing samples, in inscriptions already noticed, of all the successive variations which have taken place in their writing during the same period. But, without entering into the consideration, how far there is reason to suspect that some of the coins exhibited may, like the above-mentioned samples, be mere spurious fabrications, I have to observe that, even if they were all genuine, they would not in the remotest degree support the truth of the Chinese Annals; while, on the other hand, some of them which are exempt from suspicion, bear positively against it, and serve considerably to strengthen the proofs already adduced against the legibility of any Chinese characters that are of real antiquity. A few remarks will be sufficient, I hope, to make this very evident.

In the first place, the coins which are shown as the oldest, have no writing or figures of any kind on their surface; so that the only ground for the great ages assigned to them is the mere *ipse-dixit* of the Chinese antiquarians. Upon this point P. Cibot very justly observes: “On trouve dans quelques Recueils, de petites pieces de monnoie qu’on prétend être du regne de Yao. Mais il est bon de savoir qu’on n’a commencé à en parler qu’au commencement du second siecle après Jesus-Christ, et que la lettre *monnoie* ne se trouve point dans toute l’histoire de la

^a It is but right here to state what du Dalde mentions respecting a collection formed by order of the Emperor Kang-he; that although it contains the coins of all the earlier reigns, and of course many above 4000 years old, yet it wants those of some of the sovereigns who come nearer to modern times. This deficiency he considered very favourable to the genuineness of the collection; for, in his opinion, if the Chinese government had recourse to fabrication, they would not have left any chasms in the series. But surely, as they produced the medals which are most material to the support of their views, it is not at all improbable that they may have omitted some few of less importance, for the very purpose of suggesting to the public the idea which appears to have misled this learned Jesuit.

premiere dynastie. D'ailleurs les pieces prétendues et deniers de ce temps-là, qu'on montre dans les cabinets des curieux et des antiquaires, ne sont marquées d'aucun coin. On peut les dire de tel temps qu'on veut."—*Mémoires, &c. par les Missionnaires de Pékin*, tom. i. p. 229. Those which are supposed to be the oldest, are shaped somewhat like the blade of a knife or cutlass; but there are also round ones, with a square hole in the middle, for the purpose of stringing them together, which are also very ancient. The latter shape has been continued in use to the present day; of the former Du Halde tells us: "— outre les monnoyes de figure ronde, il y en avoit dès le commencement de la première dynastie, qui étoient faites en forme de coutelas et qu'on nommoit *Tao*, qui signifie coutelas."—tom. ii. p. 165. With respect to both kinds M. Hager—in his *Essai de Numismatique Chinoise*, published at Paris in 1805, and founded principally on a Chinese treatise upon the same subject, from which du Halde also derived his information—describes specimens which are reputed to be of great age, and have no writing of any sort upon them. Of two round ones he says:—"Effectivement, les deux monnoies des deux premières races, figurées dans le *Traité Chinois des médailles*, ne contiennent que le simple contour avec un trou carré au milieu. L'une est attribué à Yu, fondateur de la première dynastie, et l'autre à Tang, fondateur de la seconde; mais l'auteur qui y est cité, et qui s'appelle *Kuon-tsé*, ne fait point autorité;—" pp. 21-2. And in speaking of two of the knife-form, engraved in the plates of Du Halde, he observes that they have inscriptions on them, and for that reason are not of the older kind, as the most ancient are devoid of all writing, like the two he has had delineated in his own pages. "Il est vrai que les deux couteaux que ce savant Jésuite [Du Halde] fit graver, ne sont pas d'un temps aussi reculé; ils sont ornés d'inscriptions, et les anciens couteaux n'en portoient pas: on n'en trouve pas non plus sur les deux couteaux-monnoie du Cabinet des médailles de France."—pp. 35-6.

In the second place, the oldest of the coins that have in-

scriptions, exhibit them totally illegible; not from being effaced, but because, in some of them at least, the characters, still distinctly visible, are notwithstanding unknown,—to such a degree, indeed, unknown, that it cannot even be ascertained whether they belong to Chinese writing or not, or in what way they should be turned to the eye in order to be read. In Du Halde's plate of Chinese coins, over a collection of several round ones with inscriptions, in addition to the two of knife-form above mentioned, there is placed this heading: "Monnoyes incertaines ou etrangeres dont on ignore le temps." And with respect to such coins he tells us: "A l'égard des monnoyes anciennes, telles que sont les *Pou*, les *Tao*, et d'autres semblables, on a de la peine à en déchiffrer les caractères: les plus habiles Chinois avouent ingénument, que non seulement ils ne les connoissent pas, mais qu'ils ignorent même en quel sens ils doivent être situez."—tom. ii. p. 166. And M. Hager, in allusion to Du Halde's specimens of this class, tells us, that the Chinese treatise on the subject contains several more of the same kind, the writing on which, it declares, no one can decipher or understand. "Le Traité Chinois, qui les contient, déclare qu'on ne peut les déchiffrer Le Traité Chinois en contient plusieurs autres de cette espèce, qu'il déclare unintelligibles."—p. 45. How remarkably does this evidence chime in with, and corroborate that previously given, in proof of the utter illegibility at the present day of the ancient writing of the Chinese!

In the third place, the coins with legible inscriptions exhibit a signification which either has no reference whatever to dates, or at least none that in any degree serves to verify Chinese history. Upon the former class the writing alludes merely to the value of the piece, and consists, in its simpler form, of only two characters, one on each side of the square central hole; otherwise of four, of which those in the vertical line give a general, and those in the horizontal line, a more particular expression of value. Of those with the simpler inscription M. Hager informs us: "—la première monnoie chinoise qui porte

épigraphe, à deux caractères seulement, * * *Pao-ho*. Ces caractères signifient une chose de prix, un objet qui a une valeur reconnue.”—p. 51. And of the others he states as follows: “— quoique vers cette époque [l’an 465 de l’ère Chrétienne], et même long-temps avant, on commence à rencontrer des monnoies à quatre caractères, telles qu’on les voit aujourd’hui, cependant les deux caractères perpendiculaires n’offrent communément qu’une denomination générale de l’argent, tandis que les deux horizontaux expriment la valeur particulière de la monnoie.”—p. 63.

I now come to the class of legible coins in which the inscription, consisting of four characters—as it still does to the present day—expresses by those in the vertical line some reference to date; and in order to explain the nature of this reference, it will be necessary for me to give a very brief account of the Chinese modes of dating, and of the *Nien-hao*, or names which the emperors are in the habit of affixing to the years of their reigns. The following extract is taken from the statement on the subject by M. des Hautesrayes, inserted at the end of De Mailla’s translation:—“Indépendamment des titres que les Empereurs Chinois prennent en montant sur le trône, l’usage s’est introduit depuis l’an 163 avant l’ère Chrétienne,—que l’empereur Ouen-ti fut abusé par un Tao-ssé, comme on peut le voir, à cette époque, dans l’Histoire de la Chine, tom. ii. p. 562;—de donner aux années de leurs règnes des noms particuliers, empruntés de quelque évènement mémorable, ou de pure fantaisie. Ces noms ont changé autant de fois qu’il leur a plu, parce qu’il dépend de l’Empereur seul de continuer un nom ou d’en prendre un nouveau, lorsque quelque révolution considérable semble l’inviter à ce changement. Ces noms d’années, composés pour l’ordinaire de deux mots, tiennent lieu de date dans les lettres, dans les livres de compte, dans les almanachs et dans la conversation. L’histoire les marque avec exactitude, et ils s’y trouvent toujours accompagnés de la note cyclique de l’année.”—*Hist. Gen. de la Chine*, tom. xii. après page 348, p. i. Of the use made of these *Nien-hao*, and of the mode of ascertaining

the dates for which they are so fantastically substituted, our author gives the following illustration : “ — par exemple, si je trouve, citée dans quelque livre chinois, la cinquième année dite *Kouang-ho* de l'empereur Ling-ti des *Han* ; il faut que je sache que ce prince, monté sur le trône l'an *Méou-tchin*, ou 45^e du 48^e cycle, c'est-à-dire, l'an 168 de l'ère Chrétienne, a changé quatre fois de noms de règne dans l'espace de 22 ans qu'il a occupé le trône ; qu'il prit d'abord le nom de *Kien-ning* qu'il garda quatre ans ; ensuite celui de *Hi-ping*, c'est-à-dire, *joie égale*, qu'il conserva pendant six ans ; qu'à la onzième année de son règne il prit le nom de *Kouang-ho* ou d'*illustre concorde* qu'il quitta après six ans pour prendre celui de *Tchong-ping* ou de *seconde concorde* qu'il conserva six autres, c'est-à-dire, jusqu'à sa mort, arrivée l'an 189. Au moyen de ce petit calcul nécessaire je sais que la cinquième année dite *Kouang-ho* est la quinzième année du règne de l'empereur *Ling-ti*, et par conséquent l'an 182.” — *Ibidem*, pp. 1, 2.

This description gives rather too favourable an idea of the mode of expressing dates employed by the Chinese, at least as far as respects their ordinary practice ; for to their principal designation of time, the *Nien-hao*, they are not in the habit of adding the name of the sovereign to whose reign it belongs ; and when they make use of the cyclical notation, their custom is to state merely the year of the current cycle, and to suppress the number which that cycle holds in their system. Both omissions, though not occasioning any obscurity in the dates of the passing day, must, obviously, be productive of much confusion in reference to remote times, and have greatly facilitated the operation of extending backward the distance of those times, before the Chinese chronology assumed its present settled form. Indeed even still the system betrays evident marks of this retrograde movement ; for it exhibits no less than three different commencements of Chinese history. The dynasties are made to begin with Yu at the imaginary date of 2205 years before the Christian era ; the cycles, with Hoang-ti, seven reigns and 493 years earlier ; and the series of emperors, with Fou-hi, two

reigns and 255 years yet earlier. And traces of the movement in question, continued back to still more extravagant lengths, may be seen in the following extracts from the *Tableau Chronologique* prefixed to P. de Mailla's work :—" Entre Fou-hi et Chin-nong [second empereur], l'auteur du *Ouai-ki* place les noms de quinze monarques qu'on dit avoir régné 17,798 ans ; mais qui n'étoient que des officiers de Fou-hi. En voici la liste D'autres varient l'ordre de cette liste Quelques historiens donnent à Chin-nong sept successeurs, qui de père en fils ont occupé le trône avant Hoang-ti [troisième empereur] durant 379 ans :—" The circumstance of the mandarins not having sanctioned such farther extensions of their history, is perhaps to be attributed to their having got, through external sources, some notion of the time of the general deluge. It is difficult otherwise to account for their stopping just barely at the limit which that event supplies ; for the Tao-sse, who are more ignorant, and lay less stress upon information derived from abroad, have passed this boundary, and extended their *Annals* beyond it several million of years.

The marks for the several terms of the cycle are formed from the combination of ten principal, with twelve subordinate characters, as may be seen from the corresponding combinations of the words by which they are read in the following table :

1 Kia-tsé.	11 Kia-su.	21 Kia-chin.	31 Kia-ou.	41 Kia-tchen.	51 Kia-yn.
2 Y-tchéou.	12 Y-haï.	22 Y-yéou.	32 Y-veï.	42 Y-ssé.	52 Y-mao.
3 Ping-yn.	13 Ping-tsé.	23 Ping-su.	33 Ping-chin.	43 Ping-ou.	53 Ping-tchen.
4 Ting-mao.	14 Ting-tchéou.	24 Ting-haï.	34 Ting-yéou.	44 Ting-veï.	54 Ting-ssé.
5 Ou-tchen.	15 Ou-yn.	25 Ou-tsé.	35 Ou-su.	45 Ou-chin.	55 Ou-ou.
6 Ki-ssé.	16 Ki-mao.	26 Ki-tchéou.	36 Ki-haï.	46 Ki-yéou.	56 Ki-veï.
7 Keng-ou.	17 Keng-tchen.	27 Keng-yn.	37 Keng-tsé.	47 Keng-su.	57 Keng-chin.
8 Sin-veï.	18 Sin-ssé.	28 Sin-mao.	38 Sin-tchéou.	48 Sin-haï.	58 Sin-yéou.
9 Gin-tchin.	19 Gin-ou.	29 Gin-tchen.	39 Gin-yn.	49 Gin-tsé.	59 Gin-su.
10 Kouei-yéou.	20 Kouei veï.	30 Kouei-ssé.	40 Kouei-mao.	50 Kouei tchéou.	60 Kouei-haï.

These compound denominations are applied by the Chinese not only to the several parts of their cycles of sixty years, but also

to those of their cycles of sixty days ; and the subordinate component series of twelve words is employed by them to denote the several portions of the day, each word expressing two hours.

To return to the indications of time which the Chinese coins supply, I have taken from M. Hager's treatise the copy of one in the Cabinet of Medals in Paris. (See Plate V. No. 6.) The characters, which are all out of use except that for the number ten, are supposed to be read by the Chinese words immediately nearest to them outside the coin, and to have the significations expressed by the next adjoining French. Those in the horizontal line—of the meaning of which there can be no doubt, as the signs of numbers, on account of their fewness and the simplicity of the ideas they express, are least liable to be forgotten—relate to the value of the piece. It is therefore only the two in the vertical line which can have any connexion with a date. These, I take it for granted, are correctly read TATSUEN, with the meaning of *great fountain* ; though they are extremely different from the modern characters to which they are imagined to be equivalent.^a I have selected the above specimen, because it is described in a Chinese treatise relied on by P. Amiot, as well as in that to which our author so frequently refers. Of the learned Jesuit's opinion he gives the following account:—" Il croit, d'après le *Tcheou-li*, ou rituel de cette dynastie, que cette monnoie est de *King-ouang*, empereur des

^a In particular the lower character differs from the modern one with which it is matched, namely, that for TSEUEN (as the word is written according to English orthography) a fountain, consisting of two symbols, and thereby immediately denoting *white water* ; the shape of which may be seen in Plate V. No. 1, and its explanation in pages 54 and 55 of this volume. Dr. Morrison, however, gives older variants of this character ; between two of which (exhibited in Plate V. No. 7) and the one before us some analogy may be traced. Here it deserves to be noticed, that he derives the meaning of the older figures from a rude resemblance of them to the thing represented ; so that, as far as this instance goes, it serves to show, that the Chinese characters have been changing, not only in their shape, but also in the very principle of their construction.

Tcheou, et il lui attribue en conséquence une antiquité de deux mille ans.”—*Essai par M. Hager*, p. 64.

Thus it appears that P. Amiot, on the authority of the Chinese work in his hands, determined TA-TSUEN, or *great fountain*, to be a Nien-hao, or substitute for date, employed by the emperor King-ouang, who, according to the Chinese Annals, began his reign at a time corresponding with the year 519 before our era; that is, according to the same Annals, 356 years before these Nien-hao ever came into use. While, on the other hand, the work consulted by MM. Du Halde and Hager, places their introduction in the year 465; that is, 628 years later than it is fixed by the Annals. “La première monnaie qui porte le nom de l’empereur est, selon le Traité Chinois que nous avons si souvent cité, de *King-ho*, empereur de la dynastie des petits *Soung*, qui régna l’an 465 de l’ère Chrétienne.”—*Essai par M. Hager*, p. 62. To prevent misconception of this extract, it is to be noticed, that what is in it called the name of the emperor is merely a name of date employed by him. For instance, *King-ho* was the substitution for date adopted by the emperor *Fi-ti*, which can only in a very loose sense be considered as his name.

Three Chinese authorities have now been submitted to the reader, differing very materially from each other, as to the time when the Nien-hao were first adopted as names of certain years, or substitutions for dates. But, what is also an additional cause of great confusion, the Chinese are not always agreed, as to whether the characters in the vertical line of a coin have a reference to date or not. Thus, in the case of the specimen before us, P. Amiot, we have seen, decided, upon one Chinese authority, that *great fountain* was a Nien-hao; whereas, from the other Chinese treatise on medals, M. Hager infers, that the words in question were used figuratively as a mere general denomination of money. “TA-TSUEN. Ce qui signifie *grande source*, *grande fontaine*; c’est le nom dont on se servoit autrefois pour désigner ce que nous appelons *monnaie*. Du Halde observe que c’est dans un sens figuré, parce que la monnaie est une espèce

de métal qui passe continuellement de main en main.”—p. 65. According to this latter view of the subject, which is probably the correct one, the piece under examination belongs to the second description of legible coins without date.

But let us take a more favourable example. Suppose, then, the two characters in the vertical line of a coin to be modern, and not to admit of any doubt, either as to the words by which they should be read, or as to those words being intended to convey an expression of date; and that they thus presented to us the compound word *Long-king*, which is known from Chinese history to have been the *Nein-hao* employed during the six years that *Mo-tsong* of the *Ming* dynasty reigned. The cyclical mark for the first year of this emperor's reign is *Ting-mao*, that is, the fourth of the cycle, which cycle again—according to the number of emperors recorded in the annals since *Hoang-ti*, and the length assigned to their reigns,^a—is the seventy-second of the system. If therefore we subduct 2697—the number of years that these cycles are made to begin before the Christian era—from seventy-one times sixty years added to four years; that is, from 4264 years; the remainder, 1567, shows the year of our era which corresponds with the first of the six years to which the legend in the vertical line of the coin refers us. Now,

^a Of course, in European practice, the simplest way of finding out the number of the cycle corresponding to any epoch, would be had by reference to a table of cycles; and the mode above alluded to, would be applied only to verifying or constructing the table. The correctness of this mode does not require, or depend on, the truth of the Chinese history, in respect to the prodigious length of time over which it is extended. From the general practice of the Chinese of neglecting all consideration of the number of the current cycle, it was in the power of their savans, whenever it was that they put their chronological system upon its present footing, to annex, *ad libitum*, to the cycle then passing whatever number they pleased, only taking care to stretch backward the history, so as to make it commence at the beginning of the first cycle. As soon as this was done, it is evident that the cycle corresponding to any period of the history, was to be determined by reckoning the distance from the commencement of the system, in the same way as if that system had been founded in truth.

as the Chinese history can be fully depended on as far back as the year 1567,—for at any rate so far it is checked by the accounts of European writers,—the date thence deduced may be acquiesced in; and we might be nearly certain that the age of the coin in question was rightly determined as above. But what information would the inscription, in consequence, supply us with? would its date, ascertained by means of the history, serve to verify any point of that history? Not a single point. If indeed the coin exhibited, in addition to *Long-king*, either the imperial name Mo-tsong, or a complete cyclical description of the first year of his reign, it would then verify one or other of the facts above deduced from the Chinese history, namely, that it was Mo-tsong who adopted the compound word Long-king as his emblem of date, or that this whimsical expression corresponded, in the commencement of the time to which it applied, with the fourth year of the seventy-second cycle. But as the case now stands, in the bare state in which the Nien-hao appear upon the Chinese coins, uncombined with any other signs that could be connected with chronology, it is evident that, even under the most favourable circumstances, they borrow their signification of dates altogether from the history, while in turn they pay back nothing whatever in verification of that history. To point out the utter futility of such a coin as an instrument for supporting the truth, or detecting the falsehood of historic accounts, it is only necessary to compare it with an English one, from which the face, the name, and the titles of the sovereign had been effaced, and on which nothing was allowed to remain but the date, and just enough of the armorial or other signs to show the country from which it issued. If the date, in correspondence with that above found for the Chinese piece, was 1567, I would know indeed from history that Elizabeth then reigned over England; but the coin, in its supposed state, would not afford the slightest confirmation of this historic fact, nor would it in any degree serve to remind us of the glory and prosperity of our country, under the sway of that illustrious queen.

Du Halde accounts for the non-appearance of any likeness of the Chinese emperor on his coins as follows:—"Mais quelle est la marque ou l'inscription de ces monnoyes? En Europe elles sont marquées au coin du Prince. Il n'en est pas de même à la Chine. Ce seroit, selon le génie de cette nation, une chose indécente et peu respectueuse pour la Majesté Impériale, que le portrait du Prince passât continuellement par les mains des marchands et de la plus vile populace."—tom. ii. p. 166. But why the mandarins should instil this absurd notion into the mind of their sovereign, or why they should exclude his imperial name as well as his portrait, and also every cyclical mark, from the money in circulation, has never been explained. The reader, however, of the foregoing pages will, I trust, be at no loss to perceive the true motive for those omissions. Certainly if, at any time since the Chinese writing through external improvements became more permanently legible, the government wished to extend backward the history of the country, and to prevent the coins of that period and the cyclical notation from giving evidence of the fraud, they could not, in reference to either chronological index, have resorted to a more artful and effectual expedient than that which they have actually adopted.

Whether the mandarins still continue the inscription of the *Nein-hao* on the coins, I cannot say. They would no longer now answer the purpose to which in former times they were so admirably adapted; and M. des Hautesrayes has not inserted any in his tables lower down than the close of the *Ming* dynasty in 1644. In, however, M. Hager's publication of 1805, they are spoken of as yet in use, and the omission in the cyclical notation of the number of the current cycle is stated to be still practised. "Les Chinois ne connoissent point d'autre méthode pour indiquer la date, que de marquer l'année du règne de leur souverain. Le cycle de soixante ans n'est qu'additionnel; les Chinois n'en savent point l'origine; ils en marquent les caractères et en negligent le nombre, comme les Indiens."—*Essai*, &c. p. 61.

To the argument which, from various sources, has now been urged against the truth of by far the greater part of Chinese history, is to be added that which has been given in the first volume of this work, founded on abstract considerations, as to the absolute impossibility of any writing purely ideagraphic supplying a permanently legible record. Here, however, I advert to the reasoning employed upon the more general subject, only to point out, that the particular circumstances of the Chinese case fully accord with that reasoning, and, as far as they go, bear out the position to which it leads. In the preceding chapter proofs are adduced of a change in the meaning of Chinese characters constantly going forward;—a change which, it is there shown, is actually, on one account, accelerated by the very means—the laborious means—to which the Chinese are, on another account, compelled to resort for the purpose of preventing it. No writing, indeed, that is connected, whether mediately or immediately, with a living language, can be wholly exempted from this evil; but alphabetic designations present a check to it which we in vain look for in the Chinese characters; and, if a system which has been so long and so carefully cultivated, utterly fails in this respect, surely the example goes a great way towards completely establishing the conclusion, that a better result would not follow from the use of a large collection of any ideagrams whatever. But the change of meaning to which the Chinese characters are liable, is not the only obstacle to their permanent legibility; another fully as pernicious, if not more so, is to be found in their continual change of shape, which evidently tends to destroy all vestiges of identity between those characters in their present and their original state. In this respect they are far inferior not only to alphabetic signs, but even to the Egyptian hieroglyphs; for being wholly arbitrary in their formation, their change of figure cannot be checked by reference to the external standard of any objects existing in nature. Had they been as simple in shape as the letters of an alphabet usually are, they still would be more mutable in this respect nearly in the same proportion as they

are more numerous ; but the fact is, they are vastly more complicated, and consequently, on both accounts, they are more changeable than any letters whatever.

The Chinese savans, indeed, anxious to conceal the present illegibility of their ancient writing, eagerly contend for the immutability of the characters they employ, and maintain that those characters have not in the slightest degree been altered during the last seventeen or eighteen hundred years. Their assertions, however, on this point are not entitled to the least attention ; and it is really astonishing how Europeans could ever have been imposed upon by such manifest and glaring falsehoods. Not only is it evident from the very nature of the case, as already unfolded, that the Chinese symbols are extremely liable to mutation ; but also the circumstance of their having in the course of time actually undergone a great many changes of shape, is placed beyond the reach of doubt by the effects of those changes, displayed in the large amount of *variants*,^a as they are termed, which pervade this writing. These variants are described, and distributed into classes, in the grammatical treatises which have been written by Europeans, and are besides to be met with continually in the dictionaries. In that of Dr. Morrison alone may often be seen five or six varieties of form

^a In the preceding chapter has been noticed a class of variants depending on the change of meaning of the characters ; but the term in its more proper sense has a reference only to a change of shape. These variants are described by M. Abel-Remusat as follows : “ Comme beaucoup de caractères ont changé de forme par la succession des temps, il y a quelquefois plusieurs orthographes reçues pour le même caractère. L’usage s’est introduit d’appeler *variantes* les différentes formes dont un même signe est susceptible. Ces variantes, qui ont leurs renvois dans les dictionnaires, ne s’emploient pas toujours indifféremment les unes pour les autres.”—*Gram. Chin.* art. 17. The Professor, in full accordance with the mandarins, stoutly maintained that Chinese characters which were, it seems, in use four thousand years ago, are still perfectly legible ; but if he had wished to expose the utter absurdity and falsehood of the position, he could not have done so more effectually than by the statement he has above made, of the alterations of shape which those characters have from time to time been constantly undergoing.

for a single character ; and of course the student would find still greater and more numerous changes, if he had access also to other dictionaries, and especially to such as were of different ages. The fact of the Chinese writing having suffered a great number of successive alterations is still farther presented to view, and made a subject for actual observation by M. Hager, in the plates of his work on the monument supposed to be Yu's, where he has given a sentence engraved in symbols of this graphic system, varied in the shaping of their component lines, in no less than thirty-two different ways. In fine, it may be remarked, that we have an admission of the fact from the mandarins themselves,—and that too sustained by their highest authority,—in the specimens exhibited by the Royal College at Pe-kin of the variations of their characters in successive ages. For although those specimens are, by the surest criterion,—that afforded by comparing them with writing that is undoubtedly of great antiquity,—proved to be spurious ; yet this circumstance does not weaken the force of the acknowledgment that changes of the characters have taken place, but only shows that those changes are entirely different from what they have been represented by the mandarins.

Of the complication of Chinese characters an idea may be formed from the number of their ingredient lines, which in some groups amount to fifty. The *key*, or principal part of a group, may contain seventeen lines ; and from thirty to forty are often to be found in the secondary part. In drawing an analogy, therefore, between the two kinds of writing, Chinese characters should not be compared to single letters, but to the combinations of letters by which words are expressed ; and even if these combinations were as mutable as the former,—which they are not by any means,—still the advantage in permanence of legibility would lie, to an infinite extent, on the side of the alphabetic groups. A little consideration will, I conceive, make this very apparent. The Chinese characters being arbitrary, not only as to the number and shape of the lines of which they are formed, but also, in a great degree, as to the manner in

which those lines are combined, two of them nearly the same in appearance may have very different meanings, or two quite different may have the same meaning; so that an old group once ceasing to be inserted in the dictionaries, its signification is for ever lost. But in alphabetic designations, on the other hand, the separate elements indeed are arbitrary, but their combinations are not so; when, therefore, the shapes and powers of the letters are fixed,—and as they are few in number, those properties of them may be established in the mind almost as immutably as if founded in nature,—then the sound expressed by any particular group can be ascertained, whether the reader has met such group before or not, or whether it continue to be inserted in dictionaries or not; and from the analogy of that sound to others with which he is better acquainted, he is led to its signification.

To illustrate the point before us, I quote, from Johnson's History of the English Language, a few verses of the translation of the Bible which Wickliff made about four centuries and a half ago. "In the dayes of Eroude, kyng of Judee, ther was a prest, Zacarye by name, of the sort of Abia; and his wyf was of the doughtris of Aaron; and hir name was Elizabeth. And bothe weren juste bifore God, goynge in alle the maundementis and justifyingis of the Lord withouten playnt. And thei hadden no child; for Elizabeth was bareyn, and bothe weren of greet age in her dayes. And it bifel that, whanne Zacarye schould do the office of presthod in the ordir of his course to fore God, aftir the custom of the presthod he wente forth by lot, and entride into the temple to encensen. And al the multitude of the puple was without forth, and preyede in the our of encensying; and an aungel of the Lord apperide to him, and stood on the right half of the auter of encense. And Zacarye seyng was afrayed; and drede fel upon him. And the aungel sayde to him, Zacarye drede thou not; for thy preier is herd, and Elizabeth thi wif schal bere to thee a sone; and his name schal be clepid Jon. And joye and gladyng schal be to thee; and manye schulen have joye in his natyvyte; for he schal be great bifore the Lord, and he schal not drinke wyn ne

sydyr, and he schal be fulfild with the holy gost yit of his modir wombe,—” But as our familiarity with the subject of this passage assists us in reading it, I subjoin another from a work a few years older, but which has been inaccessible to the public for a great portion of the time since it was written; namely, *The Voiage and Travaile of Sir John Maundevile, Kt. Which treateth of the way to Hierusalem; and of Marvayles of Inde, with other Ilands and Countryes*. The author composed this work after returning from his travels in the year 1356; and it was, I believe, first printed entire in the year 1725, from an original MS. in the Cottonian Library. From this edition of the book I give Sir John’s description of Northern China, of the two towns of which Pe-kin is composed, and of the imperial palace and grounds situated in one of them:—

“Chatay is a gret contree and a fair, noble and riche, and fulle of marchauntes. Thidre gon marchaundes alle zeres, for to sechen spices and alle manere of marchandise, more comounly than in ony other partye. And zee schulle undirstonde, that marchaundes that comen fro Gene, or fro Venyse, or fro Romanye, or other partyes of Lombardye, thei gon be see and be londe 11 monethes, or 12, or more sum tyme, or thei may come to the Yle of Cathay, that is the princypalle regyoun of alle partyes bezonde; and it is of the grete Cane another old cytee toward the Est, and it is in the Provynce of Cathay. And besyde that cytee the men of Tartarye han let make another cytee that is clept Caydon; and it hathe 12 zates: and betwene the two zates, there is alle weys a gret myle; so that the 2 cytees, that is to seyne, the olde and the newe, han in circuyt more than 20 myle. In this cytee is the sege of the grete Cane in a fulle gret Palays, and the most passynge fair in alle the world: of the whiche the walles ben in circuyt more than 2 myle; and within the walles it is alle fulle of other palays. And in the gardyn of the grete Palays there is a gret hille, upon the whiche there is another palays; and it is the most fair and the most riche that ony man may devyse. And alle aboute the palays and the hille, ben many trees, berynge

many dyverse frutes. And alle aboute that hille ben dyches grete and depe; and besyde hem ben grete vyneres, on that o part and on that other. And there is a fulle fair brigge to passe over the dyches. And in theise vyneres ben so many wylde gees and gandles and wylde dokes and swannes and heirouns, that it is with outen nombre. And alle aboute theise dyches and vyneres is the grete gardyn fulle of wylde bestes; so that, when the gret Cane wil have ony desport on that, to taken ony of the wylde bestes or of the foules, he wil lete chace hem and taken hem at the wyndowes, with outen goynge out of his chambre."—pp. 256–8.

An English reader can be at no loss for the series of articulate sounds represented by the groups of letters in either of the preceding extracts; and the analogy of those sounds to forms of spoken words with which he is familiar will, with very little difficulty, conduct him to their sense; or he can arrive even more directly at that sense by the analogy of the old groups of letters to modern ones, without the intervention of a comparison of the sounds they express. But if there was a change to a correspondent extent in the forms of any of the sets of characters now used in China, a book that, after having been withdrawn from the public eye for even half a century, was found written in groups of lines so much altered from their present composition, would be totally illegible.

Here, perhaps, it may occur to the reader to object: if the Chinese dictionaries prove a great change of the characters, why should they not also supply a remedy for the evil, by enabling us to trace back the groups to their original forms, and thereby to read works that are really old? To this objection two answers may be given. In the first place, even if the dictionaries had the efficacy thus attributed to them, the adequateness of ideographic writing to the production of a record of lasting legibility would not be thereby made out; as those dictionaries are themselves derived from an alphabetic source. But in the second place, they have no such efficacy; for neither do they reach back to ancient times as far as is pretended, nor if they

did, would the older ones be now legible. The latter point, I apprehend, is, independently of any abstract reasoning on the subject, clearly evinced, on the one hand, by the conduct of the mandarins, as well, in not producing any books that are old, but only what are said to be reprints of such books, as in destroying ancient records inscribed on marble; and on the other hand, by the actual illegibility of such of those records as have escaped destruction from their hands. But it is obvious that age must affect the writing of the Chinese the same way in dictionaries as in their other literary works. Here it may be added, by the way, the remark not being called for in reply to the proposed objection, that even as far back as these books are legible, they do not fully answer the purpose of the retrograde investigation in question. For the observation not unfrequently occurs in the translations of Chinese works, that such or such a character is not to be found in the dictionaries.

Undoubtedly both dictionaries and printing have, since their introduction, afforded most valuable service, in lengthening the time during which Chinese writing continues legible, by retarding the change of the characters; but, notwithstanding, that change is still going forward. How great, therefore, must have been the rapidity of alteration, before the influence of those checks was brought to bear upon it! Even this consideration alone, exclusively of the proof derived from investigating the facts of the case, brings with it, as appears to me, conviction to the mind that, if any really ancient Chinese record,—one, for instance, a thousand years old,—or the fac-simile of such a record, were now submitted to the inspection of the mandarins, they would no more be able to read it, than they could decipher the hieroglyphic or enchorial part of the Rosetta inscription.

With respect, however, to works that have passed through continued series of copies, I admit that the process of change occurring in the successive transcriptions of an ancient book,—putting out of consideration the part of it occasioned by mistakes,—may have kept pace with that going forward in the general course of Chinese writing; as each copier, whether in

manuscript or in print, may very naturally be supposed to have made use of the shape of characters with which he was familiar, and even to have done so, without observing that he was, in the least, deviating from the copy immediately preceding his own. In this way certainly a Chinese treatise much in request, may be conceived to be retained in a legible state, for some time after the characters in which it was at first written, could no longer be deciphered; but while its legibility would be thus preserved, the identity of it in meaning and purport with its original might very soon be lost. For there would be no security that, along with the shifting of the characters, there would not be a concurrent shifting of the sense, when there was no ancient copy legible, by reference to which variations of the latter kind, however produced, might be checked. Now, although the evil here pointed out cannot be got rid of through any means supplied by the Chinese system itself, yet it may, in some measure, be remedied by the aid of early alphabetic transcripts; and, no doubt, the mandarins avail themselves of this aid for the preservation of their favourite works. But a fact which affords so humiliating a proof of the great inferiority of their national writing, will not be acknowledged by them, till they lose the power of concealing it from the public eye; and, in the mean time, can be arrived at only by its effects.

Still it may be asked: may not the peculiar characters employed in the writings of Confucius, notwithstanding the continual alteration of those in common use, have been from the first unchanged, and his compositions thus preserved without the extrinsic aid of alphabetic evidence? To both parts of this query I must reply in the negative. The Chinese literati, indeed, as well as their European admirers,^a vehemently insist on

^a Thus, for instance, the Abbé Grosier, in the dissertation he has prefixed to his treatise upon China, gives the following description of the state of the tchhouan characters in the *Shoo-king*: “—on a peut-être publié à la Chine deux mille éditions du *Chou-kin*, sans qu’on se soit jamais permis d’y introduire la plus légère variante. Tous les caractères de ce livre sont comptés, et en omettre, en déplacer, en altérer un seul seroit regardé comme un attentat,

the absolute immutability of the symbols in question; and do so, with a view to establish the consequence just drawn from it,—a consequence, however, which does not at all thence follow. But it is unnecessary to enlarge upon the inconsecutiveness of their reasoning on this subject; as the basis on which they ground it is wholly unfounded: the one set of Chinese ideagrams, as well as the other, are clearly proved by the dictionaries to have been greatly altered in the course of time. The symbols of which M. Hager has had engraved thirty-two variations, are called by him, it may be observed, in the passage upon the subject already quoted from his Essay, *tchouen-tsu*; that is, they belong to the very class of characters exhibited in the works of Confucius. But, as the *Tchouen-tsu-luy* and *Tching-tsu-tong* to which M. Hager refers, as his authorities for the successive changes of those characters, are, I believe, not easily to be met with, I avail myself of a further proof, which will enable me to bring the point at issue under the immediate cognizance of my reader. In Plate VIII. is given, from M. Abel-Remusat's grammar, a Chinese sentence in the *tchhouan*, and the modern character. Now if the former symbols had never suffered any alteration, it is obvious that they

contre lequel tous les lettrés se feroient une religion de réclamer. Il seroit donc bien étrange que la dernière édition du *Chou-kin*, faite pour l'empereur, ne fût pas conforme à toutes celles qui l'ont précédée. Disons plutôt que, supposer une pareille innovation, c'est connoître bien peu la Chine, ses maximes et sa littérature."—*Discours Prelim.* p. lxxii. And M. Klaproth, in the letter of his published in the same dissertation, asserts upon this point: "— on ne peut former aucun doute raisonnable sur la constante uniformité du texte dans toutes les éditions du *Chou-king*, soit qu'elles soient émanées du gouvernement soit, qu'elles aient été publiées par des particuliers. Jamais je n'ai vu le texte de cet antique ouvrage imprimé avec des variantes."—*Ibidem*, p. lxxv. The characters employed in the *Shoo-king* may very possibly have never been varied; for the work, as has been already shown from its contents, is a mere modern fabrication. But their absolute unchangedness is, in these extracts, asserted on the supposition of their being above 2300 years old; and the monstrous absurdity of the statement is overlooked by our authors, in their eagerness to establish the perfect preservation, in its original state, of this main foundation of Chinese history.

Chinese characters compared

the modern

the tchhouan

上古結繩而治後世聖人易之以書契百官以治萬民以察

上古結繩而治後世聖人易之以書契百官以治萬民以察

would be totally different from the latter in their present state. But, upon comparing the two series together, it will be seen that the corresponding symbols differ from each other, in the shape of their ingredient lines, little more than Roman and Italic letters ; and, in the number and composition of those lines, not as much as English words four hundred years old, and those words as written at the present day. It is, therefore, I submit, very unlikely that the tchhouan symbols before us have reached the age of four centuries. This conclusion puts a limit, not to the antiquity of Confucius, but only to the remoteness of the period when the elements of his writing received their present appearance ; and the difference between the two sets of characters points out the amount of variation which the modern ones may have undergone within the length of time just specified. It is, indeed, very difficult to conceive, how a more rapid alteration could have been avoided, in a system consisting of such numerous and complicated ingredients. But it is to be recollected, with what care the works of Confucius, and the very symbols in which they are printed, are at present committed to memory by the Chinese. The pains thus taken must powerfully contribute to check all variation in the shape of those symbols ; and the standard of reference hereby supplied, when combined with the effects of dictionaries and printing, must have rendered the form of the general writing of the Chinese, during the last few centuries, far more stationary than it could have been in earlier ages.

With the view of the subject which has in the foregoing pages been submitted to the reader fully accords the internal evidence which may be derived from the history itself, in the marks it supplies both of absolute falsehood, and of exaggeration as to the remoteness of the dates of such parts of it as have any foundation in truth. Thus most, or indeed nearly all of the useful discoveries which are stated to have been made in early days, are attributed to the sovereigns of China and their consorts. Now, kings and queens are generally otherwise employed, and have not sufficient leisure to distinguish themselves

much in this way; but there are, besides, other circumstances connected with the recorded inventions, which render the accounts respecting them utterly unworthy of credit. For instance *Fou-hi*, the first emperor, is said to have invented, not indeed the characters employed at present, but the principles on which they are formed, and which lead directly to the construction of all their different classes, not excepting even the phonetic class; so that, it seems, the extensive and complicated system of the modern Chinese symbols is not the gradual production of a long series of ages, but the entire plan was struck off by a single individual, even by the very first of the Chinese who ever made use of any species of writing. The account of this extraordinary achievement is thus alluded to in P. de Mailla's translation of the *Annals*:—"On attribue encore à Fou-hi l'invention de six règles, avec lesquelles, mettant en usage les lignes ou les *koua*, il espéroit réussir dans la composition des caractères qu'il cherchoit. Ces six règles consistoient à former ces caractères, 1°. par l'image ou la représentation de la chose même; 2°. par emprunt, on transport d'idée d'une chose à l'autre; 3°. par l'indication de la chose; 4°. par union, en joignant deux caractères ensemble, qui, ainsi unis, en formeroient un troisième dont le sens seroit composé des deux caractères; 5°. par usage et tradition; 6°. enfin, par les sons et les accents. Mais Fou-hi ne mit point ces règles en pratique; il en laissa le soin à ses successeurs."—*Hist. Gén. de la Chine*, tom. i. p. 8. That it should have occurred to Fou-hi to apply usage and tradition to a subject to which, as having no previous existence, they were wholly inapplicable, appears almost as wonderful as that he should have hit upon the notion of a phonetic use of signs; but where the whole account is so passing strange, it is needless to dwell upon its separate parts.

Ching-nong, the immediate successor of Fou-hi, was also a very wonderful discoverer. Among other instances of his inventive genius he originated and considerably advanced the science of botany; having written a book on the medical properties of plants, which is yet extant,—of course exactly as he

composed it;—and although it is certainly above 4538 years old, its author having died just 2698 years before the Christian era, yet is it still perfectly legible, and in great repute among the Chinese botanists of the present age. As a proof of the extraordinary zeal and talent displayed by him in the prosecution of this important study, it is stated, that he discovered in the course of a single day seventy kinds of poisonous plants, and seventy more, supplying respectively for each poison its antidote. But let us read, in P. de Mailla's own words, this ingredient of a history which he has pronounced to be, next to the Sacred Scriptures, the most authentic of all that have been written respecting the events of antiquity : “ La tradition porte que, dans un seul jour, il discerna jusqu'à soixante-dix sortes de plantes vénémeuses, et qu'il en trouva autant qui en étoient le contre-poison. Il eut soin de recueillir une plante de chacune de ces espèces, de les ranger dans la classe qui leur convenoit ; il en composa une histoire naturelle, qu'on appelle l'*herbier de Chin-nong*, qui existe encore de nos jours.”—*Hist. Gén. de la Chine*, tom. i. p. 13.

With these astonishing achievements in the field of invention, effected by the first two emperors of China, may be compared those attributed by Manetho to two personages of great antiquity in his list of Egyptian sovereigns ; and it will, I apprehend, be found interesting to trace the very close similarity which subsists between fictions that have been produced in different countries under similar circumstances. Of the second king of his first dynasty, who was, it seems, named *Athosthis*, and lived only a little more than 5500 before the Christian era, the Egyptian high-priest tells us, “ that he reigned twenty-seven years, and built the palaces in Memphis ; moreover that he cultivated the medical art, and wrote certain books upon anatomy.”^a Manetho has not, indeed, mentioned those books in a

^a Αθῶσθις ὁ τούτου υἱὸς ἤρξεν ἔτεσιν κζ'. καὶ τὰ ἐν Μέμφει βασιλεία ὑποδόμησεν, ἰατρικὴν τε ἐξήσκησεν, καὶ βίβλους ἀνατομικὰς συνέγραψεν.—*Georgii Syncelli CHRONOGRAPHIA*, p. 55.

definite manner, nor has he referred to them as still extant in his own time; and so far the analogy between the two statements here compared together, falls short of being perfectly complete. But the failure in this respect can be easily accounted for; as the Egyptians had no Board of History, like that established in China. Of the second king of his third dynasty, who was named *Tosorthros*, and lived about 500 years later than Athosthis, the same historian informs us, “that he reigned twenty-nine years, and was held by the Egyptians to be *Æsculapius* on account of his medical skill; that, besides, he invented the use of hewn stone in the construction of edifices, and applied himself with care to the improvement of writing.”^a

But to return to our Chinese inventors;—Hoang-ti, third emperor of China, ordered his consort, Si-ling-chi, to discover the use of the silk-worm; and accordingly she, being a most obedient wife, not only found out how to make thread from the material supplied by this insect, but also richly embroidered very beautiful pieces of silk that were thence produced. That the Chinese—who are stated to have been at that time clothed in the skins of beasts, and of course wholly ignorant of the art of weaving,—should have been able to form those pieces, is rather surprising; the circumstance, however, is, upon the authority of the Chinese Annals, recorded by P. de Mailla, as follows:—“Ce grand prince [Hoang-ti] voulut aussi que Si-ling-chi, sa légitime épouse, contribuât au bonheur de ses peuples: il la chargea d’examiner les vers à soie; et d’essayer à rendre leur duvet utile. Si-ling-chi fit ramasser un grande quantité de ces insectes, qu’elle voulut nourrir elle-même dans un lieu qu’elle destina uniquement à cet usage; après bien des soins et des peines, elle trouva non-seulement la façon de les élever, mais encore la manière d’en dévider la soie et de s’en servir L’impératrice Si-ling-chi réussit si bien à découvrir

^a Τόσορθρος ἔτη κθ'. οὗτος Ἀσκλήπιος Αἰγυπτίοις κατὰ τὴν ἰατρικὴν νενόμισται, καὶ τὴν διὰ ξεστῶν λίθων οἰκοδομίαν εὗρατο, ἀλλὰ καὶ γραφῆς ἐπεμελήθη.—*Georgii Syncelli CHRONOGRAPHIA*, p. 56.

les différens usages de la soie, qu'elle en fit faire des étoffes d'une grande beauté, et sur plusieurs elle broda elle-même des fleurs et des oiseaux. Les habits jusques-là n'avoient été que de peau; on ne connoissoit point encore la toile ni les autres étoffes dont on s'est servi dans la suite pour s'habiller; mais depuis que l'impératrice eut trouvé la manière de travailler la soie, on eut bientôt celle de faire de la toile;—" *Hist. Gén. de la Chine*, tom. i. pp. 24, 27.

Of stories equally wonderful the greatest abundance might be produced from P. de Mailla's translation; but I fear I should fatigue my reader by dwelling longer on the subject. For the same reason I must abstain from giving any illustration of the other point to which I have alluded, as affording internal evidence against the truth of Chinese history; namely, a mark of the exaggeration of its antiquity which is to be found in the extreme paucity of events therein recorded, when compared with the assumed length of time through which the narration of them is diffused. To exemplify this it would be necessary to quote thirty or forty quarto pages; for frequently, in the course of reading the French work, so many may be turned over, without our meeting with a single transaction deserving of the slightest attention. In the case of several of the dynasties, the actions recorded of an entire series of emperors of a common family name, are not more than might be expected from a single emperor of that name; and if the whole history of the first nineteen dynasties,—which comes down to an era about six hundred years distant from the present time, and occupies nine large quarto volumes of the work in question,—were divested of its prolixity and self-evident falsehoods, all that would remain worth telling, might easily be compressed within less space than that appropriated by Sir Walter Scott to the description of one eventful life—the life of Napoleon Bonaparte.

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE VERY LOW STATE OF CHINESE ATTAINMENTS IN VARIOUS
BRANCHES OF HUMAN LEARNING.

UNREASONABLE PREJUDICE IN FAVOUR OF CHINESE LITERATURE—
EXTREME IMPERFECTION OF CHINESE GEOGRAPHY—SILLY AND
INSIPID SUBJECTS OF CHINESE HISTORY—GROSS IGNORANCE OF
THE CHINESE WITH RESPECT TO ASTRONOMY—THE ACCOUNT OF
AN ECLIPSE IN THE SHOO-KING AS FICTICIOUS AS THE REST OF
THAT WORK—AN EXAMINATION OF THE REGISTER OF ECLIPSES
IN THE CHUN-TSEW—PROBABILITY OF THE CHALDEAN ORIGIN OF
THIS REGISTER—CONCLUDING REMARKS UPON CHINESE ASTRO-
NOMY—VERY LOW CONDITION OF THE MEDICAL ART IN CHINA—
SOME ACCOUNT OF THE MORAL WRITINGS OF CONFUCIUS—A SU-
PREME GOD AND A FUTURE STATE NOT ACKNOWLEDGED BY THIS
SAGE—ETHICS OF CONFUCIUS IDENTIFIED WITH THOSE OF THE
ECLECTIC SCHOOL—EXTRACTS FROM DR. MARSHMAN'S TRANSLATION
OF THE LUN-YU—FURTHER IDENTIFICATION OF THE ECLECTIC
AND CONFUCIAN SYSTEMS—ILLUSTRATION OF THE INJURIOUS EF-
FECTS OF IDEAGRAPHIC WRITING.

UPON the last point relative to the graphic system of China, which I have proposed to discuss,—namely, its failure as a mean of supplying information in other studies as well as in history,—it will not be necessary to dwell very long. It is, indeed, obvious, *a priori*, that if the part of human life which is best fitted for acquiring the rudiments of knowledge, be all taken up with learning merely how to read and write, the energies of the mind must be cramped by such a plan of education, and little opportunity can be left for the cultivation of more advanced branches of instruction. Accordingly, the accounts of this nation which are best entitled to credit, represent the Chinese as labouring under the grossest ignorance with respect to most subjects of

interest, particularly such as are connected with science, and require any effort of abstract reasoning. On the other hand, there are writers of the present day, including among them men of considerable talent, who take quite an opposite view of the matter; whose opinions readily pass current from the light agreeable style in which they are expressed, and the plausibility with which they are put forward, and in whose representations it thus becomes the fashion to acquiesce without examination. A very brief review of the case will be sufficient to enable an impartial reader to determine on which side the truth really lies.

Amongst the admirers of Chinese learning no one is louder or more extravagant in its praises than M. Abel-Remusat. Thus, in the preface to his Grammar, he speaks of the extent of the riches contained in Chinese books, and of the treasures of Chinese literature; and the piles of such works with which the King's Library in Paris is encumbered, he calls a precious mine of varied wealth, of which ignorance alone could mistake the value. That I do not here overstate the extravagancy of his expressions, will be seen from the following extracts:—"De bons ouvrages composés sur différens sujets d'histoire ou de géographie, de philosophie ou de belles-lettres, ont permis de mieux apprécier l'étendue des richesses contenues dans ces livres chinois, demeurés enfouis depuis si long-temps au milieu de la poussière de nos bibliothèques."—*Preface*, p. v. "Celui qui aura pris un de ces ouvrages [that is, one which is accompanied with a translation] pour guide, et qui se sera mis en état de le suivre pas à pas, sera bientôt en état d'aller seul. Alors tous les trésors de la littérature chinoise seront à sa disposition; et s'il lui est permis de fréquenter la bibliothèque du Roi, cinq mille volumes s'offriront à lui, la plupart n'ayant pas encore été ouverts, remplis de notions aussi neuves qu'importantes, et renfermant presque tout ce que les Chinois ont de meilleur en fait d'histoire, d'antiquités, de philologie, de géographie, de mythologie, de philosophie, d'histoire naturelle, de politique, de législation, de statistique, de poésie, de romans et de pièces de

théâtre. Cette mine si précieuse, et presque intacte au milieu de tant d'autres qui semblent épuisées, suffiroit pendant cinquante années aux travaux de vingt personnes studieuses. On ne croit plus à présent qu'il faille toute la durée de la vie d'un homme pour apprendre les élémens du chinois ; en effet, deux ou trois ans d'études au plus suffiront désormais pour ouvrir à un homme zélé et persévérant, un libre accès à ces richesses variées, dont l'ignorance seule peut méconnoître le prix, et qu'une négligence peu philosophique a laissées trop long-temps en oubli."—pp. xxxi—ii. It is now twenty years^a since this pompous eulogium was passed upon the literature of China, and several Chinese works have been since translated into French or English, exclusive of those which had formerly been brought under the notice of Europe by the Jesuits, and which were more usually exhibited in a Latin dress ; but certainly neither the recent nor the older translations warrant, in any degree, the praises which are here so lavishly bestowed upon their originals. Unquestionably many of those translations have been executed with care and fidelity ; and are, therefore, interesting, as they present a true picture of the peculiar habits and notions of a very peculiar people. They are valuable also, for making us acquainted with the real state of things in China, and for the aid they afford in the study of the Chinese language and system of writing. But no farther does their importance rise ; they supply no information which, independently of those considerations, is in itself of the slightest use.

Great allowance is to be made for those engaged in a difficult study, if, become enamoured of the subject of their labours, they are disposed to see in it beauties and advantages which in reality it does not at all possess ; but it is to be regretted that the system of misrepresentation, with respect to China, which has grown partly out of this disposition, has proceeded to the extravagant lengths it has gone. M. Abel-Remusat is not the only

^a The preface from which these passages have been extracted, is dated September 16, 1820.

inamorato who attributes to Chinese literature merits which are quite imaginary ; there are several others who take every opportunity they can of propounding similar views of the matter. Of such practice a curious instance now lies before me, in the *Aperçu général des trois Royaumes*,—a translation from the Japanese by M. Klaproth, and one of the series of books printed under the direction of the Oriental Translation Fund Committee, to which I have already referred for an account of the Korean alphabet. This treatise commences with a description of Corea, which M. Klaproth admits to be very meagre ; and he, in consequence, subjoins another from a Chinese geographic work. In stating this in his preface, he takes the opportunity of making the very extraordinary assertion, that comparative geography (i. e. which includes a comparison of ancient with modern sites and denominations) is better understood and more accurately ascertained in China than in Europe ! But let us read this declaration in his own words :—“ *Rinsifée* commence son livre par une notice de la Corée, qui, on ne peut le nier, est extrêmement maigre. Comme ce pays est fort peu connu en Europe, j’ai pensé qu’il convenait d’ajouter à la description donnée par l’auteur japonais, celle qui se trouve dans la grande géographie de Chine, publiée sous les Mandchoux, et intitulée *Tai thsing y thoung tchi*. Cette composition est principalement historique, comme la plupart des ouvrages géographiques des Chinois. Chez eux la civilisation n’a pas été interrompue depuis que leur empire existe, et par conséquent *les traditions relatives à la géographie politique, ont pu se conserver beaucoup mieux qu’en Europe*, où des siècles de barbarie avaient presque entièrement anéanti la littérature ancienne. L’habitude des Chinois de tenir registre de tout ce qui se passe dans leur patrie, a été extrêmement favorable à la conservation des notions historiques, de sorte qu’il est facile de déterminer la position exacte de tous les lieux mentionnés dans leurs annales ; en un mot, *la géographie comparée de la Chine est établie sur des bases plus solides que celles de l’empire romain et de l’Europe en général.*”—*Preface*, pp. ii–iii.

What! is it possible that M. Klaproth, when he wrote this, could have been a stranger to the fact, that nothing deserving the name of geography was known in China, till maps were laid down by the Jesuit missionaries from a trigonometrical survey which they had taken of the country; and, consequently, that the Chinese must be now entirely ignorant of the true situations of such ancient places as had ceased to present any vestiges to observation, before those maps were formed? Or could he, when passing this encomium,—which may, indeed, impose on those to whom the subject is wholly new, but must to others appear a mere fiction that is ridiculous from its extravagance,—have overlooked the circumstance of an emperor of the present dynasty having ordered foreign names to be written after a new method; which certainly implies that the one previously used was imperfect, and consequently that the denominations given in the Annals to ancient sites, and particularly to those outside China, cannot be depended on? Or still further, could he, at the time, have been unacquainted with the complaints frequently made by the Chinese themselves, of the extreme confusion and uncertainty produced in their Annals by the continual alteration of the names of places therein mentioned? I should feel pleasure in being able here to acquit our author of intentional deceit; but I fear his vindication from the charge will not be found an easy matter, as he was a profound Chinese scholar, and consequently ignorance of the points involved in the foregoing queries can hardly be pleaded for him. In fact, not only is it the case that the Chinese are quite in the dark with respect to ancient geography, but also their modern system is far from being accurate; as may be shown even from the very book which gave occasion to M. Klaproth's remarks. In this treatise the distances and relative situations of places are given in a very loose manner; the former only in round numbers; and the latter not nearer than they can be described by eight points of the compass; and, what is worse than mere vagueness of expression, there are numerous blunders in it, so

glaring that even the translator himself has been obliged to acknowledge and correct not a few of them.

Of the geographical errors in the Chinese work a few specimens are here subjoined, together with their corrections :—

“ *Villes de la Corée*—1. *Khai tcheou tchhing* est à 200 li au sud-ouest de la ville royale. *Note.* C’est ainsi qu’on lit dans l’original pour nord-ouest.”—p. 49. “ 19. *Weï chan tchhing*

est au nord-ouest de Khing tcheou, dans la principauté appelée *Weï chan kiun*. *Note.* Il doit y avoir ici une faute d’impressions dans l’original, car d’après toutes les cartes, *Weï chan* est au sud-est de Khing tcheou.”—pp. 61–2. “ 39. *Ting tcheou tchhing*, situé à plus de 300 li au nord-ouest de Phing jang, . . .

son territoire s’étend au nord-ouest jusqu’à la frontière d’*I tcheou*. *Note.* Dans le texte il y a par erreur sud-ouest.”—pp. 77–8. “ *Eaux*—1. La mer, dit la Géographie de la dynastie des Ming, entoure le Tchao sian de trois côtés, à l’est, à l’ouest,

et au sud. A l’orient de cette contrée, ses eaux sont en général tranquilles et si claires qu’on y peut voir à une profondeur de dix toises chinoises. Les anciennes descriptions disent : ‘ La grand mer occidentale commence à l’est (à l’ouest ?) du bourg *Tchhang ming tchin*, qui est sous la juridiction de Houang tcheou ; elle reçoit le fleuve *Ta thoung kiang*.’ Elle est également à l’est [here it is evident the same correction should be made as just before] de *Pě tcheou* et de *Haï tcheou*, toutes ces places sont situées sur les bords de cette mer.”—pp. 109–10.

“ 9. Le *Foë lieou kiang* est au sud de kiang toung kiun. C’est une branche du Han kiang, qui coule à l’ouest et se réunit au Ta thoung kiang. *Note.* C’est une erreur ; le Foë lieou kiang n’est pas un bras du Han kiang ; c’est l’affluent le plus considérable de gauche du Phaï chouï ou Ta thoung kiang, et la rivière qu’on voit sur la carte de d’Anville, par 39° de latitude, au sud de Tcheng tchuen et Sieu teng.”—p. 116. “ 11. Le

Thou men kiang fait la limite nord-ouest (lisez nord-est) du royaume.”—p. 119. “ *Antiquités de la Corée*

5. L’ancien pays des * * *San han*. Les provinces actuelles de la Corée nommées *Houang haï* et *Tchoung thsing*, étaient la

patrie des * * *Ma han* ; le *Thsiuan lo* fut celle des * * *Pian han* ; le *Khing chang*, celle des * * *Chin han* Les *Ma han* étaient à l'ouest, et se composaient de cinquante-quatre tribus, au nord ils étaient limitrophes avec la principauté de *Lō lang* ; au sud (à l'est) ils avaient le Japon. Les *Chin han* étaient à l'orient, et comptaient douze tribus ; ils avaient les *Weï mē* au nord. Les *Pian han* habitaient au sud [south-west it should be] des *Chin han*, et se composaient également de douze tribus. Ils avaient le Japon au sud (sud-est). [North-east it should be, to tally with the translator's preceding correction : but it would be more correct to say that the central part of Japan is to the east of *Thsiuan lo*, and south-east of *Houang hai* ; so the probability is, that M. Klaproth, by an oversight, inverted his two corrections]."—pp. 151-3.

These extracts will be sufficient to show how very unwarranted M. Klaproth was, in asserting any superiority of Chinese, over European skill in geography. So far, indeed, are the Chinese from having attained to eminence in this branch of knowledge, that they really are more deficient in it than might have been expected, considering the opportunities of improvement they have had within reach, ever since the commencement of their intercourse with Europeans. Of the notions with respect to geography which formerly were held in China, and which still prevail there to a considerable extent, the following passage of Gutzlaff's Journal gives a very just representation :—
 "Fancying the earth to be a square, they assumed to themselves the main land in the centre, and allowed to the other nations the small and remote clusters of islands, in various directions around themselves. How could they look upon the poor inhabitants of those scattered lands otherwise than with the utmost contempt ! The sovereign of so great a nation, also regarding himself as the sole potentate of earth and the viceregent of heaven, claimed the universal dominion over all the lands and the four seas. Their princes he considered his vassals and tributaries. He slighted them when he pleased, viewing them merely as the petty chiefs of barbarous tribes ; yet, with much

compassion, he occasionally condescended to receive their embassies. Though the modern improvements in navigation, the progress in the science of geography and in general information, have partially rectified their opinions on this subject, yet they are too proud to confess the fact of their national ignorance; to this moment they claim the title of 'the flowery middle kingdom,' and would have all the princes of the earth humbly do them homage. We still hear the same old stories about the 'four seas' repeated, and maps of the world may be met with, which so represent it still."—p. 64. To this account I shall merely add, that the notions described by Gutzlaff are by no means confined to the vulgar; allusions to them may be found in some of the most popular Chinese works. For instance, a drama has been translated by Stanislas Julien for the contributors to the Oriental Translation Fund, and published in London in 1832; in which the decision of a judge, bearing some resemblance to that called the judgment of Solomon, forms the main incident of the plot. At the conclusion of this drama, *Hai tang*, the principal female character, declaring that the decision in question ought to be made known to all the world, utters the following sentence:—"Seigneur, cette *Histoire du Cercle de Craie* est digne d'être répandue jusqu' 'aux quatre mers,' et d'arriver à la connaissance de tout l'empire."

Another passage from M. Klaproth's translation, as not being very long, is here subjoined, to show the little value of the information to be derived from Chinese histories, and the extreme insignificance of the subjects with which they are chiefly occupied. "Dans la neuvième des années I hi (413 de J. C.), *Lian* envoya une ambassade à la cour de la Chine; elle apporta une lettre de soumission et des présens; l'empereur donna à *Lian* plusieurs titres, entre autres, celui de général en chef oriental de la province de Young tcheou, roi de Kao kiu li, et compte de Lǒ lang. Au commencement de la dynastie des Soung (vers 420 de J. C.), le même *Lian* reçut encore les plus hautes dignités militaires. Dans la douzième des années Yuan kia (424 de J. C.), *Lian* dépêcha une ambassade à l'empereur

Taï wou ti des Weï, qui lui accorda le diplôme de roi de Kao kiu li. Lian mourut sous les Thsi, dans la neuvième des années Young ming (491 de J. C.). Son fils *Yun* fit demander les ordres de l'empereur des Weï, qui l'année suivante le gratifia du diplôme par lequel il fut nommé inspecteur militaire de la mer de Liao, comte du Liao toungh, et roi de Kao kiu li. Yun mourut sous les Liang, dans la dix-huitième des années Thian kian (519 de J. C.). Son fils *Ngan* lui succéda, et envoya son tribut aux Liang, qui le créèrent général en chef de l'orient et roi de Kao kiu li. Plus tard il dépendit des Weï orientaux et des Thsi septentrionaux de la famille de Kao. Après la fin de la dynastie de Thsi, le Kao li fut compris dans le pays de Liao toungh. Sous les Soui, dans les années Khaï houang (de 581 à 600), *Yuan* roi de Kao li s'étant réuni au Mǒ khǒ, fit une invasion dans le Liao si, ou pays situé à l'occident du fleuve Liao choui. Les Soui firent marcher le général *Hang wang liang* contre lui pour le punir. Celui-ci ayant passé le Liao choui, Yuan lui envoya une ambassade, par laquelle il reconnut sa faute et se soumit; par conséquent la guerre cessa. Dans les années Ta nie (de 605 à 616), le général *Liu tchhǎ szu* combattit contre les Kao li sans pouvoir les vaincre. Sous la dynastie des Thang, la quatrième des années Wou tǎ (621 de J. C.), *Kian wou*, roi de Kao kiu li, envoya une ambassade et le tribut à la cour de l'empereur. Kian wou était frère cadet de Yuan. Dans la septième de ces années (624), il reçut le diplôme de roi de Liao toungh kiun (ou des principautés situées à l'est du fleuve Liao choui).”—pp. 28–30. This is a tolerable sample of the worthlessness of Chinese histories, and of the littleness of mind betrayed in their composition. Here, in what professes to be an account of the transactions which occurred in the intercourse between China and Corea for the space of above two hundred years, not a single incident is related that was worth recording, even if it were known to be one that had really taken place; but, indeed, no dependence can be placed on the truth of any part of the narrative, notwithstanding the

plausible appearance of accuracy as to names and dates with which it is put forward.

The same attention to trifles, in preference to matters of any consequence, will be found to pervade the Chinese Annals; but, as they are written in a less brief style, it would occupy, I fear, too much room to illustrate, by full quotations from them, this their distinguishing feature. To give, however, some idea of their frivolity, I subjoin an abstract of the reign of *Tching-ouang*; which I select from them, not as presenting more insignificant details than other reigns, but because, though stated to have commenced so long ago as the year B. C. 1115, this part of the history affords an opportunity of showing how very lately it was either written, or had interpolations made in it. In this reign, said to have lasted thirty-seven years, and to the account of which fifty-six quarto pages are devoted, the quelling of a revolt, indeed, and the building of a city are mentioned; but the subjects chiefly dwelt upon, and which occupy by far the greatest number of pages, are speeches to his majesty, all about nothing, in which virtue is recommended in vague general terms, or, when any particular merits are enjoined, those chiefly specified are silence, attention to ceremony and decorum, respectful civility to the mandarins, the keeping up a full establishment of those gentlemen, and the preservation of all their dignities and grades of rank. Thus, upon one occasion, the example is proposed to him of a predecessor who was so anxious to avoid doing any thing wrong, that, for three years after mounting the throne, he was most industrious in doing—nothing; and during all that space of time never uttered a single word. “Aussi quand il fut monté sur le trône, il garda trois ans entiers un profond silence; mais quoiqu’il ne parlât point, il n’étoit pas pour cela oisif; occupé sans cesse des moyens de ne pas faire de fautes, il n’auroit pas osé perdre un seul moment.”—*Hist. Gen. de la Chine*, tom. i. p. 329. On another occasion the grandes of his court are represented as thus addressing him: “Pour bien gouverner l’empire, il est important que votre majesté ait à ses côtés des ministres éclairés, sages et fidèles. Les *Tchang-pe* sont obligés,

par leur emploi, de procurer au peuple leur subsistance, et de veiller à ce que les vivres ne manquent pas. Les *Tchang-gin* doivent veiller sur la conduite des mandarins, et en instruire votre majesté. Les *Tchun-gin* sont obligés de veiller à ce que la justice se rende. Les *Tchouai-y* sont chargés des choses qui sont à l'usage de votre majesté. Les *Hou-pen* doivent avoir soin des flèches, des piques et autres instrumens de guerre.”—*Ibidem*, pp. 300–1. After this comes a long harangue from his principal adviser, in which a vast number of other offices and dignities are enumerated; but I shall not detain the reader with this speech, nor with a decree of his majesty, by which a great many additional posts were created. Both documents are extracted from the *Shoo-king*, and afford a striking exemplification of the frivolity and tedious prolixity of that work.

Passing by the remaining speeches, which are all of the same general description, let us proceed to the events of this reign. One of those upon which the greatest stress appears to be laid, is the arrival of an embassy from a very distant country, with a present to his majesty of—a white cock-pheasant. The ambassadors being asked by what motive they were induced to come so far, replied, that it was to thank his majesty for the uncommonly fine seasons they had during the last three years; as they had no doubt but that the gods had granted to them this blessing in compliment to his majesty, and in consequence of so good an emperor being placed upon the throne of China. “Cette même sixième année, *Tching-ouang*, après avoir établi ses différens officiers, reçut la nouvelle que les ambassadeurs d'un royaume étranger, appelé le royaume de *Yue-tchang-chi*, venoient lui apporter des présens, et faire hommage. Ce royaume, situé au sud du pays de *Kiao-tchi* ou de la *Cochinchine*, n'avoit jamais envoyé personne en *Chine*. L'empereur ordonna de les amener à sa cour, et qu'on leur rendît par-tout beaucoup d'honneurs. Ce prince les reçut fort bien, les traita avec distinction, et accepta leurs présens, parmi lesquels étoit un faisan blanc, espèce inconnue jusques-là; après quoi, il leur fit demander pour quel sujet ils étoient venus. Ils répondirent, par

interprètes, que les vieillards disoient hautement dans leur pays, que depuis trois ans on n'avoit vu ni vents, ni tempête, ni pluies hors de saison, ni grandes vagues sur la mer, et qu'il falloit qu'il y eût quelque cause spéciale d'une telle faveur du Tien ; qu'apparemment le trône de la Chine étoit occupé par un sage empereur, qui leur procuroit ces bienfaits."—*Hist. Gen. de la Chine*, tom. i. p. 316.

The sequel of this story would be very interesting, only for the circumstance that there is not a particle of truth in it. Here it is : "Tcheou-kong, après cela, les conduisit à la salle des ancêtres de la famille régnante, où il fit étaler, d'un côté les présens qu'ils avoient apportés, et de l'autre ceux que *Tching-ouang* envoyoit à leur prince, parmi lesquels étoient cinq chariots d'une nouvelle invention. Ces chariots mettoient à couvert et indiquoient en même-temps la route qu'ils tenoient, par le moyen d'une petite boîte, faite en forme de pavillon ou de dôme, suspendue à l'impériale, dans laquelle étoit une main qui marquoit toujours le sud, de quelque côté que les chariots tournassent. C'est pour cette raison qu'on les appella *Tchi-nan-tche*, ou *chariot du sud*. Cette machine fut d'une grande utilité aux envoyés de Yue-tchang-chi ; car arrivés au royaume de Fou-nan-lin, sur le bord de la mer, ils montèrent des barques, et par le moyen de cette boussole, ils ne mirent qu'un an pour retourner dans leur royaume."—*Hist. Gen. de la Chine*, tom. i. pp. 316–18. I have already given an instance of a trick played off in these Annals, for the purpose of gaining for the Chinese the credit of a knowledge of astronomy in very ancient times ;—a trick which is manifestly exposed by an ignorance on the part of the historians, in reference to the subject described by them, that must have equally extended to all the Chinese scavans ; as some of the ablest astronomers of the country are always included among the members of the Board of History. In like manner the passage now quoted was evidently written with the view of causing it to be believed, that the Chinese understood the use of the mariner's compass near three thousand years ago. But there is no reason whatever to suppose they

had any idea of this instrument long before the Portuguese navigators reached the shores of China; and, consequently, the only effect of the artifice is to show, that this part of the Annals was not composed till within the last four hundred years.

I shall tax my reader's patience with only one more event of this eventful reign. Tcheou-kong, who figured away as premier upon the occasion described in the last extract, was once upon a time absent from his majesty; when the emperor most graciously despatched a courier to this favourite, with a present of two bottles of wine, and a message of inquiry as to the state of his health. Tcheou-kong nobly replied, that the wine was too good for mortals to drink, and he would, therefore, reserve it for the gods. But that, as to the question how he was, he would not answer it; because it was beneath the dignity of the emperor to show anxiety about the health or welfare of any of his subjects! The French translation of the words which the prime minister, dropping on his knees before the imperial courier, uttered upon this notable occasion, is as follows:—"Le courier de votré majesté m'a remis du vin de *Ku-tchang*,^a en me demandant de sa part des nouvelles de ma santé. Quant aux deux vases de vin *Ku-tchang*, comment oserois-je en boire? C'est un vin qu'on n'offre que pour marquer le respect qu'on a pour la personne à qui on le présente. Je n'ai garde de m'en servir que pour les sacrifices, ou dans les cérémonies des *ancêtres*. Mais un prince ne doit pas s'informer de la santé de son sujet; c'est un honneur que je ne puis recevoir, sans manquer aux usages et aux loix de l'empire."—*Hist. Gen. de la Chine*, tom. i. p. 327. The commentary of M. Des Hautesrayes on this imaginary character is, that he was one of the greatest men of his age: "Tcheou-kong étoit un des plus grands-hommes de son siècle; *Editeur*."—p. 330. It is very

^a The Editor's note of explanation on this word is as follows: "Ku-tchang étoit un vin fait de millet noir, appelé *ku*, et d'une herbe odoriférante, appelée *tchang*. *Editeur*."—p. 327. So that, after all, it appears, that this wine was brewed from a species of grain, and was no better than beer.

likely he may be so considered by the Chinese ; but what must we think of the degraded state of the nation that could respect an individual to whom such sentiments are ascribed ! Whether his majesty the emperor eat the white cock-pheasant, or Tcheou-kong kept his promise touching the affair of the two bottles of wine, we are not told ;—a circumstance which is, no doubt, much to be regretted ; as satisfactory information on those points would be fully as interesting and important as that conveyed to us in any of the fifty-six quarto pages of this reign, or, indeed, in by far the greater number of those occupied by the rest of P. de Mailla's translation of the Chinese Annals.

Let us now direct our attention to another subject. The Chinese geographical description of Corea, which has been already referred to as translated by M. Klaproth, presents to us, near its commencement, the following statement :—“ *Situation Astronomique.* Ce pays se trouve sous la constellation *Khisin*, et sous l'influence de l'astre *Tsin*.”—p. 24. This extract shows that, up to the year of our era 1744, when the edition of the original work was published, from a copy of which the translation in question was made, astrology formed an important element in the astronomy of the Chinese ; and there is not the least reason to suppose that the science is among them less embarrassed and obscured at present with this absurd ingredient. I have, in a preceding chapter, noticed the extreme ignorance of the principles of astronomy betrayed by the Chinese savans, even in those parts of their Annals in which, probably not very long since written, they lay claim to the merit of having made important astronomical discoveries in very ancient times ; but it may be worth while more fully to expose the real extent of their deficiencies in this respect ; as arguments grounded on celestial observations attributed to them, and implying, on their part, a very early knowledge of the subject, are adduced in support of the truth of Chinese history. Now, from the passage of the Annals quoted in the ensuing paragraph, it will be clearly seen that, as late as the year 1669, they were wholly unable to determine, for an assigned point of time, the declination of the

sun, or to work the simplest problem involving this quantity in its conditions ; and we may be certain that their want of practical skill was not less, than it is admitted to have been, by their own writers^a and their ardent admirer P. de Mailla. The object

^a As the history of the reign of Kang-he could not, according to the usage which has, for at least some ages past, prevailed in China, be formally published till the extinction of his race, P. de Mailla took the account contained in the extract under consideration, not from the Annals composed by the Historic Board, but from other sources, which are thus described by the editor of his translation :—" Quoiqu'il soit impossible d'avoir l'histoire authentique des TSING, puisqu'elle ne doit paroître que lorsqu'une autre dynastie leur aura succédé, néanmoins le P. de Mailla, par ses recherches, est venu à bout de se procurer des mémoires suffisans pour faire connoître la révolution qui a mis les *Mantcheous* sur le trône de la Chine, et les principaux événemens des règnes de leurs princes jusqu'en 1722. On a déjà parlé, dans une note sur les MING, du *Tong-kien-ming-ki-tsuen-tsaï*, publié la quinzième année de Kang-hi : le docteur Tchu-tsing-yen, qui en est l'auteur, a conduit ce morceau d'histoire jusqu'en 1659, que les princes de la famille des MING perdirent tout-à-fait l'espérance de recouvrer le sceptre impérial. Le P. de Mailla a écrit d'après lui ; et quand cette source a tari, il a en recours au *Tsin-tching-ping-ting-sou-han-fang-liao*, ou relation des guerres que l'empereur Gin-ti (Kang-hi) fit au *Kaldan* des *Eleutes*. Ces Mémoires, rédigés par quatre ministres d'état et par soixante-dix mandarins, tant Chinois que Mantcheous, choisis dans le tribunal des Han-lin et parmi les docteurs du premier ordre, sont écrits dans les deux langues, Chinoise et Tartare ; ils contiennent le détail de l'expédition contre les *Eleutes*, et l'abrégé des autres événemens du règne de Kang-hi jusqu'à sa quarantième année. Ce prince les revit lui-même, y ajouta une préface de sa façon, et les fit imprimer dans son palais la quarante-septième année de son règne : il en distribua un exemplaire à chacun des grands de sa cour, défendant expressément d'en laisser paroître aucun au-dehors. Cependant le P. de Mailla est parvenu à se procurer un de ces exemplaires, . . . *Editeur*."—*Hist. Gen. de la Chine*, tom. xi. note à pp. 1-2. We have here an instance which serves to show what a mere farce the secrecy is, which is said to be observed during the lives of Chinese princes, as to the contents of the memoirs which are written of their exploits. We find Kang-he not only getting a peep at his own history, but actually revising it himself ; and although he strictly orders it on no account to be carried beyond the gates of the palace, it yet, some how or other, reaches an absolute foreigner, who is suffered to translate it for transmission to Europe. The advocate for the purity of Chinese history will perhaps here object, that the memoirs in question were quite distinct from the materials lodged in the famous bureau, that is never to be opened till the

of the narrative in this quotation is obviously to celebrate the discernment of the Emperor Kang-he; but this would most assuredly have been effected in some other way, if the circumstances told to the discredit of the national skill had not really occurred. I shall here merely add, that, although the ignorance betrayed in this instance is ascribed immediately to only one individual, yet it equally extends to the whole body of the Chinese men of learning who were at the time in Pe-king; as, on the one hand, they were not prevented from interfering by the nature of the transaction, which was a trial, not of skill between two individuals, but of efficiency between two systems; and, on the other, they were urged by the strongest motives of national vanity, to give all the aid they possibly could to their countryman on this occasion. The passage referred to proceeds as follows:

“ Comme on ne pouvoit, sans un ordre exprès de l'empereur, rien changer à l'astronomie de Tang-jo-ouang,^a Yang-kouang-sien,^b son délateur et son successeur dans la place de chef du tribunal des mathématiques, se voyoit avec chagrin forcé de suivre les mêmes calculs qu'il avoit établis. Ce nouveau président intrigua tant, qu'il engagea le tribunal des rites, de qui

extinction of the reigning dynasty. But if they were not the very same, why should so much trouble and expense be incurred in their composition and revision, and what pretence could there have been for ordering them to be kept so secret? It is, indeed, quite absurd to suppose that a monarch, whose will was law, and who showed such anxiety, about a representation of his conduct and character that was intended for less general circulation, should be indifferent as to that which was, in after ages, to be published to the world at large; or that he should allow this latter account to be stored up for future use, in any other form than that which had been revised by himself.

^a This is the name given in Chinese writing to Pere Adam Schal, who had been appointed President of the Astronomical Board in the preceding reign, and was the first European raised to that office. From the total want of resemblance in sound between the two denominations, it appears that, in his time, the Chinese had not yet commenced applying the phonetic use of their characters to the designation of European names.

^b This person was the author of the persecution directed against Europeans and the Chinese converts to Christianity, soon after the commencement of the reign of the Emperor Kang-he.

celui des mathématiques dépend, et plusieurs mandarins qui lui étoient subordonnés, à se joindre à lui pour demander l'abolition de l'astronomie Européenne, comme erronnée, et le rétablissement de l'ancienne, qui étoit celle de la nation. Malgré le crédit de la cabale qu'il faisoit agir, il ne put réussir à surprendre la jeunesse de l'empereur [*Kang-hi*]; ce prince comprit mieux que ses grands le mobile et le motif de cette demande : cependant il lut le placet, et pour réponse il ordonna aux neuf tribunaux de Pé-king de s'assembler, et d'examiner avec soin le contenu de la supplique ; mais voulant se mettre en état de décider lui-même la question, il se fit instruire secrètement par des personnes versées dans cette matière, afin de connoître laquelle des deux astronomies donnoit avec plus de justesse, le mouvement des astres. Yang-kouang-sien persuadé que l'empereur adopteroit la décision des neuf tribunaux, mit tout en usage pour gagner leur suffrage ; il y réussit, et tous répondirent par un placet commun, qu'après avoir consulté les plus habiles gens, ils jugeoient qu'on devoit rétablir l'ancienne astronomie. Le jeune empereur ne se rendit point au jugement des tribunaux : il manda tous les présidens des autres tribunaux, et fit en même temps venir Nan-hoäi-gin^a et Yang-kouang-sien. Là, devant une nombreuse assemblée, après avoir parlé avec dignité de l'importance d'employer dans le tribunal des mathématiques une astronomie sûre, il s'adressa à Nan-hoäi-gin et à Yang-kouang-sien, et leur demanda s'ils n'auroient point quelque moyen sensible de faire voir à tous ceux qui étoient présens, laquelle des deux astronomies marquoit avec plus de justesse les révolutions des astres. Yang-kouang-sien qui n'avoit que des connoissances bornées, se trouva embarrassé de la proposition. Nan-hoäi-gin voyant qu'il gardoit un profond silence, prit la parole, et dit à l'empereur qu'il y avoit plusieurs moyens faciles ;

^a This is the Chinese name of Pere Ferdinand Verbiest. Here again, in a later instance than that of Adam Schal, and as late as the year 1669, it may be observed, that there was not as yet any attempt of the Chinese (such as is now made by them), to imitate the sound of European denominations.

que s'il vouloit ordonner de placer un *gnomon*, Yang-kouang-sien et lui supputeroient chacun, suivant leur méthode, à quel point l'ombre marqueroit le lendemain à midi; qu'alors on jugeroit laquelle des deux étoit la plus exacte. Cette manière de décider la question parut si simple, qu'elle eut l'approbation du prince et de toute l'assemblée. On plaça plusieurs styles de différentes grandeurs: l'antagoniste de Nan-hoai-gin ne put donner aucune supputation satisfaisante; l'Européen détermina juste les points qu'il avoit indiqués. L'empereur dit en souriant aux chefs des tribunaux, qu'ils voyoient eux-mêmes qu'il ne faut jamais précipiter ses jugemens, et qu'il avoit eu raison de ne pas se décider sans examen."—*Hist. Gen. de la Chine*, tom. xi. pp. 61–3.

This passage, notwithstanding its length, I have thought worth transcribing; because, from the recent date of the occurrence related, there can be no question as to the legibility of the original document; nor, for the reasons already stated, any doubt of either the truth of that document or the fairness of the translation. But when we get at an account thus entitled to attention, we find it clearly convicting the Chinese of utter ignorance of trigonometry and the very first rudiments of astronomy, at the time referred to. Hence it is evident that, as late as the year of our era 1669, though they might, by the aid of the Metonic cycle, or some multiple of that cycle, form a conjecture as to the time of an eclipse, yet they hardly could, as to its magnitude or duration;^a and, at all events, must have been

^a The Metonic cycle gives the times of new and full moons, and, consequently, the times when eclipses may happen: but it does not at all follow that they must then take place; nor, at any rate, even when they do, can their circumstances be the same as at the corresponding moons of preceding cycle; since the lunar nodes pass through more than a complete round during the course of this cycle. The revolution of those nodes is made in, very nearly, 6798 days; which fall short of nineteen Julian years by $141\frac{3}{4}$ days. But $6798 : 141\frac{3}{4} :: 360^\circ : 7^\circ 30' 24''$. The distances, therefore, of the syzydial line from the nodes, at the corresponding new or full moons of two successive cycles, differ on the average by about seven degrees and a half;—a difference

wholly unable to determine any of those circumstances beforehand with even the least approach to accuracy ; as they had no theory whatever to guide them in the investigation. But still, as soon as ever they found that foreigners could calculate eclipses, they boasted of having themselves the same power ; and to establish the antiquity of their knowledge in this respect, a story is framed to make part of the text of the Shoo-king, and is thence transferred to their Annals, of two astronomers named *Hi* and *Ho*, who, at so early a date as the first year of the reign of the Emperor *Tchong-kang*, corresponding to the year B. C. 2159, were executed for failing to predict the circumstances of a solar eclipse. A general called *Yn-keou* (the Chinese writers, it may be observed, are never at a loss for a name ; the fatal defect of their graphic system, as to the preservation of such as are of any real antiquity, they endeavour to conceal by the most profuse coinage of fictitious appellations, which they take every opportunity of inserting in their works) was, it seems, sent with an army to punish the delinquents ; and accordingly the two astronomers, *Hi Ho*, poor fellows, were executed. This, one would think, was securing a sufficient age for the astronomic skill of the Chinese, and a priority for it over that of all other nations ; but their knowledge of the science must be carried still farther back, even to the assumed time of the commencement of the Chinese empire ; and to establish this point, *Yn-keou*, in a long harangue addressed to his soldiers on the notable occasion in question, is made to indulge, with respect to the

which necessarily prevents any similarity in the circumstances of the cases compared together. The use of a period consisting of four of those cycles might be more depended upon in one respect ; as eclipses would be found to occur oftener at corresponding times of two such consecutive periods (those times, however, being taken in the second, a month earlier than according to exact correspondence) ; but, upon all other points, the quadruplicated cycle would leave an unskilful observer just as much in the dark as the single one. The Chaldean *Saros*, the length of which is eighteen years eleven days, differs more than the Metonic cycle from the time of the revolution of the lunar nodes ; and, consequently, would afford to a person who had no theory to direct him, still less aid in the prediction of eclipses.

two astronomers, in the following, among other remarks:—
 “Ignorans dans la connoissance des mouvemens célestes, ils doivent subir le châtiment porté par les loix de nos premiers empereurs; ces loix disent: soit que le temps de quelque évènement céleste ne soit pas bien marqué, soit qu’on ne l’ait pas prévu, l’une et l’autre négligence doivent être punies de mort, sans rémission.”—*Hist. Gen. de la Chine*, tom. i. p. 132.

That a fair representation has been here given of the nature of this story, and of the motives for its insertion in the Shoo-king, is, I submit, evident, from the incompatibility of the knowledge of astronomy it represents the Chinese to have had, four thousand years ago, with their ascertained ignorance of the subject at a very recent period; from the non-occurrence of the eclipse it describes; and from the circumstance of no other eclipse being recorded in the same narrative, for the space of the fourteen hundred years after through which it is continued. The arguments which bear against the genuineness of the Shoo-king and the truth of the whole of the ancient history of this people, need not be now taken into consideration; as, quite independently of them, the account before us can, on its own separate grounds, be shown to be a mere fiction. Eclipses have always been looked upon by the Chinese as events of the most fearful and momentous consequence; and the greatest importance is attached to the due observance of the ceremonies by which the evils they portend may, it is imagined, be averted. Is it then to be supposed that, if their astronomers once had the power of determining beforehand by calculation the times of those awful occurrences, they would ever after suffer themselves to lose it? In respect to the fabrication of the eclipse in question, it is to be observed, that the circumstances told of it, in the speech of *Yn-keou*, already alluded to, are, that it occurred at eight o’clock in the morning at the place of the Chinese emperor’s residence, and in autumn, when the sun was in the constellation *Fang*; but no such eclipse can, by retrograde computation, be arrived at for the assigned time. This, I conceive, is obvious from the disagreement of astronomers and

chronologists upon the point, the difference between them respecting it extending to twenty-seven years.^a The best selection that the case admits of was probably made by P. Gaubil, an able calculator, and strenuous advocate for the truth of the Chinese records; yet even the eclipse he pitched upon, was very far from an exact agreement with any of the proposed data: it occurred four years too late,—an hour in the day too early,—not in autumn, according to the more ancient Chinese method of dividing the seasons, but in winter,—and not in the constellation Fang, but only near that constellation. The following is his description of this eclipse: “L’an 2155 avant Jésus-Christ, le 12. Octobre, à Pé-king à 6 heures 57’ du matin, fut la conjonction du Soleil et de la Lune, dans $\simeq 0^{\circ} 23' 19''$, le nœud dans $\text{♊} 25^{\circ} 24' 27''$; latitude boreale de la Lune $26' 10''$. Il y eut donc eclipse du Soleil à Péking. Or je dis que c’est l’eclipse dont parle le Chou-king Le Soleil au temps de l’eclipse étoit donc *bien près* d’un des degrés de la constellation Fang.”—*Observations, &c. publiées par le P. Souciet*, tom. ii. p. 144. In fine, with regard to this subject, the question, I submit, must naturally occur to the mind; if the entire account were not a mere visionary tale, introduced into the Shoo-king for the purpose to which I have attributed it, why should the eclipse it relates to, appear unaccompanied by the description of any other, in the course of a history that reaches subsequently through so great a number of years? Surely if the Chinese historians could give a true account of an eclipse that took place four thousand years ago, they might at least as easily have preserved records of those of later date, and would not have

^a The following is a note of M. Des Hautesrayes on the subject, in the part of P. de Mailla’s work where the story in question is related: “Les chronologistes ne sont pas d’accord sur l’année où parut cette éclipse. Les uns, tels que Fou-gin-kiun, la placent à la cinquième année du regne de Tchong-kang, d’autres veulent que cette cinquième année fût dans le nouveau calendrier de la dynastie *Tang*, la trentième année du cycle de 60 (c’est-à-dire, l’an *Kouei-sse*, 2128 avant l’Ere chrétienne), ce qui supposeroit une erreur de vingt-sept ans; *Editeur*.”—p. 133.

omitted all mention of a long series of celestial phenomena which, in their view, were of the most vital interest.

From the digest of the astronomical treatises of the Chinese drawn up by P. Gaubil, it would, I admit, at first appear, that their ignorance of the science was not so extreme, before the arrival of Europeans, as afterwards. But in his correspondence with P. Souciet, the substance of which is inserted in the preface that the latter has, as editor, prefixed to the digest, the uncertainty of the author is acknowledged as to many of the rules of computation in those works, whether they had not a reference to astrology rather than astronomy; so that probably, in his efforts to make sense out of those rules, he may, though without intending it, have given a more favourable interpretation of them than they really deserve; and of some of them, even as they are thus presented to us, Delambre, in his *Astronomie Ancienne*, declares that they are quite unintelligible. The treatises, therefore, in question, as far as they are astronomical, bear on the very face of the description of them which has reached us, the strongest marks of having been composed by persons endeavouring to explain what they had very imperfectly learned from foreigners, whether from the Hindus, or subsequently, through the Tartars, from the Arabians; and a study which they never thoroughly understood it is no wonder they should abandon, as soon as they found that the objects which they had thereby in vain attempted to achieve, were completely effected for them by European skill. That they had not previously the power of calculating eclipses may, indeed, be seen indirectly admitted in their Annals. Thus, at the date corresponding to the year of our era 1299, the following passage occurs: "Le tribunal des mathématiques, présidé alors par Ko-cheou-king et Tchín-ting-tchin, avoit annoncé pour le premier jour de la huitième lune, une éclipse de soleil d'un peu plus de deux doigts: cependant elle ne parut point, et tout le monde craignit pour eux; mais ils s'en défendirent par divers exemples puisés dans les livres des anciens, qui prouvoient que plusieurs des éclipses prédites n'avoient pas eu lieu à l'époque indiquée;

ils citèrent dix de ces sortes d'éclipses depuis environ l'an 713 jusqu'à eux. L'empereur voulut bien se contenter de ces raisons."—*Hist. Gen. de la Chine*, tom. ix. pp. 474–5.

The thirty-six references to solar eclipses which at present appear in the pages of the Chun-tsew, are not, like the single one in the Shoo-king, descriptions intimately blended with the narrative, and occupying a considerable portion of the text; but are short detached passages, connected only with the dates, and most probably interpolated long after the original formation of this historic work. They must have been extracted from some foreign set of tables; as even from the ignorance betrayed in the mode of entering them in the Chun-tsew, independently of other considerations, it is evident that, at the time of their insertion, the Chinese were utterly unable to calculate eclipses, and, of course, could record only such as they had actually seen; whereas one at least of those referred to, though it really occurred, was not visible in China. This observation, which seems very just, has already been made by preceding writers; but as I conceive that the subject admits of further elucidation, I shall venture to bring it afresh under the inspection of the reader. For this purpose I set out with the preparative step of laying before him, from the second volume of the Memoirs written by the Missionaries of Pe-kin, P. Amiot's translation of the passages in question; to which I annex the dates of the eclipses referred to, as calculated by P. Gaubil, together with such of his remarks as afford assistance in clearing up the matter. The European dates are given in English, to mark out to the eye where the extracts from the first mentioned author terminate. The Chinese dates are expressed in years of the reigns of the princes of Loo; in lunar months, commencing with that in which the winter solstice occurs; and in days of the Chinese cycle of sixty days. The seasons are also mentioned in these dates, the first three months of the year, though beginning before midwinter, being appropriated to spring; the second set of three months, to summer; the third set, to autumn; and the remaining months of the year to winter. The year at present

in common use among the Chinese begins two months later, or at the new moon nearest to the fifth day of February. It is probably the inaccuracy of the distribution of the seasons in the older one that occasioned the alteration; which, however, is applied only to the civil, and not to the astronomical year.

I. La troisième année de *Yn-koung*, dans la saison du printemps, à la seconde Lune, le jour dénommé *Ki-see*, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. The year B. C. 720, February 22. Le neuvième Mars 1726, s'appelloit à la Chine *Ki-se*. En comptant les jours jusqu'à l'an 720 avant Jesus-Christ, on trouve que cette année 720, le 22 Février, 23 Avril, 22 Juin, 21 Août, 20 Octobre, et 19 Décembre, portoient le nom de *Ki-se*. De tous ces jours *Ki-se*, il n'y a que le 22 Février qui ait eu la conjonction du Soleil et de la Lune. Et ce jour-là à 10 heures et quelques minutes du matin, le Soleil et la Lune furent dans $\approx 26^\circ$ et quelques minutes, à *Péking*. La latitude boreale de la Lune étoit de près de $30'$. Il y eut donc à *Péking* et dans le pays de *Lou* une eclipse du Soleil visible. Durant le cours de cette Lune le Soleil entre dans le Signe des Poissons; c'étoit donc la première Lune d'aujourd'hui, et la troisième Lune dans le Calendrier des *Tcheou*. Le texte porte seconde Lune.

II. La troisième année de *Hoan-koung*, dans la saison d'automne, à la septième Lune, le jour dénommé *Jen-tchen*, premier de cette même Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. Elle fut totale. B. C. 709, July 17. la huitième Lune.

III. La dix-septième année de *Hoan-koung*, dans la saison d'hiver, à la dixième Lune, le premier jour, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 695, October 10. la onzième Lune.

IV. La dix-huitième année de *Tchoang-koung*, dans la saison du printemps, à la troisième Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 676. — Il paroît que l'histoire de *Tchun-tsieou* rapporte un faux calcul, nous verrons plus bas beaucoup de faux calculs rapportés dans l'histoire.

V. La vingt-cinquième année de *Tchoang-koung*, à la

sixieme Lune, le jour dénommé *Sin-ouei*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 669, May 27.

VI. La vingt-sixieme année de *Tchoang-koung*, dans la saison d'hiver, à la douzieme Lune, le jour dénommé *Kouei-hai*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 668, November 10.

VII. La trentieme année de *Tchoang-koung*, à la neuvieme Lune, le jour dénommé *King-ou*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 664, August 28. Au soir fut la conjonction dans Ω 27° . Le nœud ascendant dans Ω 19° et quelques minutes. L'eclipse fut visible.

VIII. La cinquieme année de *Hi-koung*, à la neuvieme Lune, le jour dénommé *Ou-chen*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 655, August 19.^a Au soir la conjonction dans Ω 18° . Le nœud ascendant dans $\approx$ $25^\circ 33'$. L'eclipse fut donc visible.

IX. La douzieme année de *Hi-koung*, dans la saison du printemps, à la troisieme Lune, le jour dénommé *King-ou*, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 648, April 6. Dans toutes les années 649, 648, 647, avant Jesus Christ, il n'y eut que le 6 Avril 648, qui fut *Keng-ou*, et qui fut la conjonction du Soleil et de la Lune. Le calcul donne ce jour là une eclipse du Soleil à la Chine. C'est donc seurement du 6 Avril, 648, dont parle le texte. C'étoit la *cinquieme* Lune.

X. La quinzieme année de *Hi-koung*, dans la saison d'été, à la cinquieme Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 645. — Le texte du *Tchun-tsieou* rapporte un faux calcul.

XI. La premiere année de *Ouen-koung*, à la seconde Lune,

^a With respect to this eclipse and the preceding one, P. Gaubil only states that they were visible; but does not add, as in other cases, that they were visible *in China*. He, indeed, mentions of the conjunction upon each occasion, that it took place *au soir*, but does not specify the hour of the evening;—an indication of uncertainty with respect to each eclipse, whether it may not have occurred after sun-set, in which case it would have been visible, not in China, but only in countries to the west of China.

le jour dénommé *Kouei-hai*, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 626, February 3. la *troisième* Lune.

XII. La quinzième année de *Ouen-koung*, à la sixième Lune, le jour dénommé *Sin-tcheou*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 612, April 28.

XIII. La huitième année de *Hiuen-koung*, dans la saison d'automne, à la septième Lune, le jour dénommé *Kia-tsée*, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. *Elle fut totale*. B. C. 601, Sept. 20. la *dixième* Lune . . . On s'est trompé dans l'ordre des Lunes.

XIV. La dixième année de *Hiuen-koung*, dans la saison d'été, à la quatrième Lune, le jour dénommé *Ping-tchen*, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 599, March 6.^a

XV. La dix-septième année de *Hiuen-koung*, à la sixième Lune, le jour dénommé *Kouei-mao*, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 592.—Fausse eclipse C'est sans doute un faux calcul des astronomes qu'on apporte.

XVI. La seizième année de *Tcheng-koung*, à la sixième Lune, le jour dénommé *Ping-yn*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 575, May 9.

XVII. La dix-septième année de *Tcheng-koung*, à la douzième Lune, le jour dénommé *Ting-see*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 574, October 22. la *onzième* Lune.

XVIII. La quatorzième année de *Siang-koung*, à la troisième Lune, le jour dénommé *Y-ouei*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 559, January 14. la *seconde* Lune.

XIX. La quinzième année de *Siang-koung*, dans la saison d'automne, à la huitième Lune, le jour *Ting-see*, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 558, May 31. Ce jour là fut la conjonction ;^b mais l'eclipse ne fut pas visible.

^a According to the method of dividing the seasons already explained, the summer is here made to commence several days before the time of the vernal equinox.

^b P. Gaubil here omits both the hour (for *Pe-king*) of the conjunction, and

XX. La vingtieme année de *Siang-koung*, dans la saison d'hiver, à la dixieme Lune, le jour dénommé *Ping-tchen*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 553, August 31.^a

XXI. La vingt-unieme année de *Siang-koung*, à la neuvieme Lune, le jour dénommé *Keng-siu*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 552, August 20.

XXII. La vingt-unieme année de *Siang-koung*, dans la saison d'hiver, à la dixieme Lune, le jour *Keng-tchen*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 552.—Je crois que l'eclipse de la dixieme Lune, est un faux calcul du tribunal des mathematiques, dont l'histoire a tenu registre.

XXIII. La vingt-troisieme année de *Siang-koung*, dans la saison du printemps, à la seconde Lune, le jour dénommé *Kouei-yeou*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 550, January 5.

XXIV. La vingt-quatrieme année de *Siang-koung*, dans la saison d'automne, à la septieme Lune, le jour dénommé *Kia-tsee*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. *Elle fut totale*. B. C. 549, June 19.

XXV. La vingt-quatrieme année de *Siang-koung*, à la huitieme Lune, le jour dénommé *Kouei-see*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 549. — Je crois que l'eclipse de la huitieme Lune est un faux calcul du Tribunal des mathematiques, dont l'histoire a tenu registre.

XXVI. La vingt-septieme année de *Siang-koung*, dans la saison d'hiver, à la douzieme Lune, le jour dénommé *Y-hai*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 546, October 13. la *onzieme* Lune.

the situation of the nodes ; so that from his account it cannot be collected how the parts of the earth over which the shadow passed, lie in reference to China. Very possibly this eclipse, as well as two others already noticed, was visible in Chaldea.

^a The inaccuracy of the manner in which the seasons are divided in this register, is strongly marked in the present instance, in which the 31st of August is placed in winter.

XXVII. La septieme année de *Tchao-koung*, dans la saison d'été, à la quatrieme Lune, le jour dénommé *Kia-tchen*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 535, March 18.

XXVIII. La quinzieme année de *Tchao-koung*, à la sixieme Lune, le jour dénommé *Ting-see*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 527, April 18. C'etoit la *cinquieme* Lune.

XXIX. La dix-septieme année de *Tchao-koung*, dans la saison d'été, à la sixieme Lune, le jour dénommé *Kia-siu*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 525, August 21. C'etoit donc l'automne et la *neuvieme* Lune des *Tcheou*. De plusieurs années, il ne peut y avoir de conjonction et d'eclipse à d'autre jour *Kia-su* qu'au 21 Août 525.

XXX. La vingt-unieme année de *Tchao-koung*, dans la saison d'automne, à la septieme Lune, le jour dénommé *Jen-ou*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 521, June 10.

XXXI. La vingt-deuxieme année de *Tchao-koung*, à la douzieme Lune, le jour dénommé *Kouei-yeou*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 520, November 23.

XXXII. La vingt-quatrieme année de *Tchao-koung*, dans la saison d'été, à la cinquieme Lune, le jour dénommé *Y-ouei*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 518, April 9.^a

XXXIII. La trente-unieme année de *Tchao-koung*, à la douzieme Lune, le jour dénommé *Sin-hai*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 511, November 14.

XXXIV. La cinquieme année de *Ting-koung*, dans la saison du printemps, à la troisieme Lune, le jour dénommé *Sin-hai*, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 505, February 16.

XXXV. La douzieme année de *Ting-koung*, à la onzieme

^a P. Gaubil omits to state the hour (for *Pe-king*) of the conjunction, and the situation of the nodes. It cannot, therefore, from his account, be ascertained where this eclipse was to be seen; and he does not himself assert that it was visible in China.

Lune, le jour dénommé *Ping-yn*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 498, September 22. la *dixieme* Lune.

XXXVI. La quinzieme année de *Ting-koung*, à la huitieme Lune, le jour dénommé *Keng-tchen*, premier de cette Lune, il y eut eclipse du Soleil. B. C. 495, July 22.

Missionnaires de Pékin, tom. ii. pp. 246–54. *Observations, &c. publiées par le P. Souciet*, tom. ii. pp. 160–1, et tom. iii. pp. 239–54.

The extreme ignorance of astronomy betrayed by the Chinese framer of this list, shows very clearly that he did not arrive at the dates it contains, by any immediate calculation of the times of the eclipses referred to. From the statement of their occurring on the day of new moon, which he makes respecting some of them and omits of the rest, it is plain that he was not aware of the fact, that solar eclipses can take place only at the time of new moon : and how utterly he was unacquainted with the true nature of the subject, is still further evinced by the mistakes (whether of transcription or of translation) which he originated, or at least adopted, in reporting a pair of solar eclipses as seen in China, with the interval of only a month between them, and again another such pair, of which one was total. There might, indeed, be eclipses of the sun in two consecutive months ; but they could not both be visible in the same country, and neither of them could be total. Delambre, without entering into these particulars, makes the following general remark upon the point in question : “ — il faut convenir que des observations pareilles prouvent bien, que les Chinois avaient peur des éclipses, et nullement qu'ils sussent les calculer.” — *Astron. Ancienne*, tom. i. p. 365. That, at the period when the insulated passages composing this list were introduced into the text of the *Chun-tsew*, the Chinese had yet advanced as far in their celestial investigations as even the Metonic cycle would have carried them, is very unlikely (for, surely, the use of any such cycle would have, at all events, taught them, to what parts of the lunation eclipses are confined) ; but to suppose that they

could then, in reference to either a future eclipse or one long past, calculate its circumstances so far as to get a right result as to the time, though a wrong one as to the countries in which it might be seen, is altogether inadmissible.

What, however, I more particularly wish to direct attention to, in the foregoing list, is the very curious circumstance of its details being, for the most part, right as to the days, and wrong as to the months of the specified eclipses;—an incongruity which has not, as far as I can find, been yet accounted for, but which not only itself admits of a clear explanation, but also serves to corroborate the proof already brought to bear against the Chinese origin of this portion of the Chun-tsew. It is certain that a register of eclipses in which the dates of a minuter kind are those that are fixed with most correctness, could not, in such a state, be an original production. It could not have been derived from computation of those eclipses: for the very same calculation which gave the days of new moon, would also give the number of lunations; and then the dates depending on the larger measure of time must have been entered as correctly as those composed of the smaller one. Neither could it, on the other hand, have been framed from actual observation: for then there would have been no room for any mistake as to the ordinal numbers by which the lunations should be distinguished; as all that would have been requisite in each instance would have been simply, without resorting to any theory of intercalation, to reckon how many new moons there were, from that with which the year commenced, to the one at which the eclipse took place: so that, upon this supposition also, the months must have been stated just as accurately as the days of the eclipses. Hence, we are unavoidably led to the conclusion, that the register under examination was derived from some foreign set of tables; and that the problem which its interpolator in the text of the Chun-tsew had really to work, was not to calculate the times of the recorded eclipses, but merely to reduce those times, already given, to their equivalents in the Chinese mode of expressing dates. Suppose, now, that the year made use of in the foreign tables consulted, was purely solar, and all the difficulties of the

case will, I apprehend, be in a great degree removed. The days of the Chinese cycle in which the several eclipses occurred, being determined for each instance, by the very simple operation of dividing a certain number by sixty, and subducting the remainder from the divisor, no mistake appears in this part of the register, in any case in which the eclipse referred to can be ascertained; but, the reduction of the fixed months of a solar year to the lunations of the Chinese year requiring some skill in the process of intercalation, the numbers attached to those lunations are, in consequence, found mostly to be wrong.

The Chinese attribute the errors in question to the circumstance of the register which exhibits them, having been framed beforehand from calculation; and to the inability of their ancestors to apply to its formation any correct method of intercalation. The latter part of their account of the matter is well-founded, and deserves attention; as it conveys an admission unguardedly made by them, that the astronomers of their country were in ancient times even still more ignorant than they are at present. But the former part of their explanation is quite untenable; for, besides that the above register affords, on the face of it, very decisive evidence that they could not calculate eclipses, the passages that compose it obviously purport not to be predictions of the future, but records of the past. The absurdity of this part of their representation of the subject may be shown, even from the manner in which it has been defended by their European admirers. Thus P. Amiot addresses objectors as follows: “— vous ne sauriez savoir, avec quelque certitude, si, dans les cas d’une eclipse faussement annoncée, les historio-graphes du temps, entre les mains desquels on remettoit les résultats des calculs des astronomes, avant l’événement de leurs prédictions, ne l’ont point insérée dans leurs mémoires parmi la foule des autres événemens;—” *Memoires, &c. par les Missionnaires de Pékin*, tom. ii. p. 261. So then, it seems, the ancient Chinese historians were in the habit of entering accounts of eclipses in their records beforehand, on the faith of returns made to them by the astronomers. Putting here out of consi-

deration the inability of the astronomers to frame any such returns, it certainly was a very strange way of writing a true history, to insert in it accounts of events before their actual occurrence. But let us suppose the history so written; would not the authors correct the portions of it which they afterwards found by their own experience to be wrong? Oh! they could not of themselves find out so much; eclipses, indeed, are taken the greatest notice of in China, and are known there to the public at large; but not to the historians without the help of the astronomers. Well, then, would not the astronomers themselves be anxious to verify their calculations by observation, and would they not very naturally be careful to correct any erroneous information they had previously given to the historians? Oh! no. The intercourse between the two parties was discontinued. How, then, is this to be reconciled with the description given of the Board of History, that the ablest astronomers have always been included among its members? Thus at every step of this account of the matter we are met by contradictions and the grossest absurdities.

Immediately after the quotation I have above given from P. Amiot, he continues the sentence in these words: “— [vous ne sauriez savoir] si les copistes n’ont point substitué, par inadvertance, un caractere cyclique à un autre; s’ils n’ont pas quelquefois écrit une Lune pour l’autre; en un mot, si, dans un temps où l’imprimerie n’étoit pas encore inventée, ceux qui transcrivoient les anciens ouvrages y apportoiënt assez d’attention pour n’y commettre aucune de ces fautes qui échappent quelquefois à la vigilance de ceux même qui sont les plus attentifs.” This extract is very remarkable for the acknowledgment it contains, which the author unaccountably suffered to escape from him, as to the liability to alteration, not merely of the elements of Chinese writing in general, but even of those employed in the text of the Chun-tsew, a work peculiarly guarded from change, by the veneration in which it is held in China, and by the practice which prevails among the men of learning in that country, of committing every symbol of it to

memory. One of the points most strenuously insisted on by the mandarins and, generally speaking, by all the admirers of Chinese literature, is, that not a single character, or part of a character, was ever changed in the compositions of Confucius; and, in fact, it is only through this assumption, that the present legibility of those compositions is attempted to be made out compatible with the prodigious age which is assigned to them. Here, however, when the passages relating to a particular subject in one of the works in question, are examined in detail, it is found necessary to give up the immutability that had been claimed for the ingredient characters, and admit that they may, in the course of numerous successive transcriptions, have undergone considerable variation. The admission of the learned father is perfectly just; but, in its consequences, it places him at variance with himself, as well as with all those who, like him, maintain, that ideographic records which are legible, may, notwithstanding, be of great antiquity.

The dates of the eclipses recorded in the Chun-tsew are far too often correct, as to the days of the years of their occurrence, to admit of the supposition of their not having been derived, more or less immediately, from a register of real observations; and this register having been proved to be of foreign extraction, the inquiry remains to be made, what is the most likely country of its origin? In conducting this investigation we are assisted by the following considerations. In the first place, the cycle of sixty, made use of in expressing the days of the eclipses, is a Hindu measure of time; and so points out pretty clearly the channel through which the object of our search was conveyed to China. In the second place, traces have already, in a chapter of the preceding volume, been detected, of an application by the Brahmans to certain purposes, of the Babylonian tables; for the acquisition of which they were most probably indebted to their intercourse with the Egyptians. In the third place, the year employed in those tables was solar, consisting exactly of 365 days; and, consequently, its months were independent of the revolutions of the moon; that is, they were such as would

serve to account for the mistakes committed in the numbers by which the lunations are distinguished in the record in question. In the fourth place, P. Gaubil's commentary affords, as I have already observed, some room for suspecting that the seventh and eighth eclipses of this record were not visible in China; while his description proves that they were seen certainly in countries to the west of China, and probably in Chaldea. Besides, the nineteenth eclipse is admitted to have been invisible in China; but there is nothing stated by P. Gaubil that makes against the supposition of its having been visible in Chaldea. In the fifth place, Chaldea is the only country in which there is reason to think that a register was framed from observation, and regularly kept, of eclipses of so old a date as those recorded in the list before us. In the sixth place, this list and the Babylonian register commence from the same period of time. There are, therefore, I apprehend, strong grounds for concluding, that the Babylonian tables, as preserved in the Library of Alexandria, or rather a Hindu translation of those tables, reached China, before the insulated passages of the derivative register under examination, were written in Chinese, and interpolated in the text of the Chun-tsew.

To this conclusion it may possibly be objected, that the eclipses in the Chinese register are solar, whereas those transmitted to us by Ptolemy, which he extracted from the Babylonian tables, are all lunar. But it does not thence follow that the tables in question did not also contain solar eclipses; on the contrary, it would appear, from his manner of expressing himself, that they recorded both kinds. For, his object being to determine accurately the motions of the moon, by deducing her place from that of the sun at very remote periods, he tells us that he preferred using for the purpose lunar eclipses (in the middle of which, he took it for granted, the moon was always exactly in opposition to the sun) rather than solar ones; as he thus avoided, in the solution of the proposed problem, the necessity for an operation which, he admitted, was beyond his skill, the

making correct allowances for the moon's parallax.^a This surely implies that he had the power of choosing between the two kinds of ancient eclipses; and, consequently, that the tables to which he had access contained both kinds; but, in his astronomical treatise, he never makes use of, or even alludes to, any other collection of ancient observations excepting the Babylonian tables. It may here, by the way, be added, that, as the nature of the problem before him required a comparison of the results deduced from the eclipses of his own time, with such as followed from the very oldest of which he could get a well-defined account, the probability is, that the eclipses he extracted from the Babylonian tables, are the most ancient of the lunar class that were described in those tables.

A comparison of the oldest eclipse in the Chun-tsew with the oldest but one of those recorded by Ptolemy, will perhaps serve to point out more clearly the connexion between the Chinese and Chaldean catalogues. The most ancient eclipse, of which an account is preserved in the *Almagest*, occurred in the first year of the reign of Mardokempad; the next, the year after, and is thus described: "The second of the eclipses is recorded to have taken place the second year of the same Mardokempad [that is, the 28th of the era of Nabonassar, and, consequently, the year B. C. 720], in (according to the Egyptian mode of dating) the interval between the 18th and 19th of the month Thoth. But she was eclipsed, they say, three digits on her southern limb, just at midnight. Since, then, the middle of the eclipse appears to have been at Babylon at midnight, it ought to have occurred at Alexandria one-half and one-third of an hour before midnight; at which time the sun reached exactly the degree of the sign Pisces $13 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4}$ [i. e. $13^{\circ} 45'$]." ^b But

^a Διὰ μόνων γὰρ τούτων [αὐτῶν τῶν κατὰ τὰς σεληνιακὰς ἐκλείψεις τηρήσεων], ἀκριβῶς ἂν οἱ τόποι τῆς σελήνης εὐρίσκοιντο, τῶν ἄλλων, ὅσαι ἦτοι διὰ τῶν πρὸς τοὺς ἀπλανεῖς ἀστέρας παρόδων, ἢ διὰ τῶν ὀργάνων, ἢ διὰ τῶν τοῦ ἡλίου ἐκλείψεων θεωροῦνται, πολὺ διαφευσθῆναι δυναμένων, διὰ τὰς παραλλάξεις τῆς σελήνης.—*Almagesti* lib. iv. c. 1.

^b Ἡ δὲ δευτέρα τῶν ἐκλείψεων ἀναγέγραπται γεγονυῖα τῷ δευτέρῳ

from the remarks which I have quoted of P. Gaubil upon the first eclipse in the Chun-tsew, it appears that he calculated the place of the sun at the new moon immediately before the full one just referred to, at the degree 26 of Aquarius, the moon having a northern latitude of about half a degree. Now as the moon was on both occasions to the north of the ecliptic, she must between them have twice crossed the plane of that orbit; and, consequently, the points of conjunction and opposition lying on the same side of the line of the node, the direction of this line must have been between the lines drawn from earth to sun at the new and full moons in question; which is accordant with the supposition of eclipses having taken place at each of those moons. The difference too of the longitudes assigned to the sun on the two occasions does not exceed the limit of the possible amount of his apparent angular motion in the intervening fortnight, by a greater quantity than can be fairly laid to the account of errors, in calculating an exceedingly remote conjunction of the two bodies. P. Gaubil expressly asserts, that the Chinese and Chaldean records of these two eclipses, belonging to the same month, verify each other. The following are his words upon the subject: “On sait que dans l’opposition qui suivoit la conjonction du 22 Février 720 avant Jésus-Christ, les Babyloniens observèrent une eclipse de la lune rapportée par Ptolemée. L’eclipse Chinoise et la Babylonienne se vérifient mutuellement.”—*Observations, &c. publiées par le P. Souciet*, tom. ii. pp. 161–2. Upon the whole, when the different grounds adduced for the Chaldean origin of the register of eclipses in the Chun-tsew, are duly weighed and combined together, their united force will, I apprehend, be found powerfully to support the conclusion to which they severally lead upon this subject.

ἔτει τοῦ αὐτοῦ Μαρδοκεμπάδου, κατ’ Αἰγυπτίους Θῶθ ιη εἰς τὴν ιθ. Εξέλιπε δέ, φησιν, ἀπὸ νότου δακτύλους τρεῖς, αὐτοῦ τοῦ μεσονυκτίου. Επεὶ οὖν ὁ μέσος χρόνος ἐν Βαβυλῶνι φαίνεται γεγωνῶς κατ’ αὐτὸ τὸ μεσονύκτιον, ἐν Αλεξανδρείᾳ, ὀφείλει γεγονέναι πρὸς ς" καὶ γ" μέρους μιᾶς ὥρας τοῦ μεσονυκτίου, καθ’ ἣν ὥραν ὁ ἥλιος ἐπέιχεν ἀκριβῶς τῶν ἰχθύων μοίρας ιγ' ς" δ".—*Almagesti lib. iv. cap. 5.*

On the view of Chinese astronomy which P. Gaubil has presented to us from original documents, I shall make but a few remarks. The history of this astronomy is made to agree with the general history of the country; as might be expected, since they are manufactured by the same body of writers, the historians and astronomers being united in one common board for this purpose. But, well-concerted as is the plan which has been adopted for effecting the object in question, still discrepancies between the two sets of records may be sometimes detected. Thus, the general Annals, as has been shown in a preceding chapter, inform us that the Chinese astronomers, so long ago as at a date corresponding to the year B. C. 2356, were acquainted, not only with the Metonic cycle, but also with a correction, not very far from the true one, to be taken into account in making use of it. Yet in the astronomic history it is admitted that, from the year 206 before the beginning of the Christian era to the year 206 after, they were not aware that any correction was necessary in the employment of this cycle, and held that it gave the times not only of new and full moons, but also of total eclipses, exactly the same in every two successive cycles. The following is P. Gaubil's abstract of the Chinese statement upon this point:—"Depuis l'an 206 avant J. C. jusqu'à l'an 206 après J. C. les Chinois ont supposé le mois draconitique de 27 jours, 7 heures, et 39 a 40'. Ils supposoient que lorsque la Lune étoit dans la conjonction ou dans l'opposition, sans latitude australe ou boreale, il y avoit eclipse totale; et que cette eclipse totale revenoit précisément la même après 135 [235?] conjonctions et oppositions;—" *Observations, &c. publiées par le P. Souciet*, tom. iii. pp. 150-1. I here suppose that 135 has been substituted in the text by an error of the press for 235; but if the case be not so, the decline of the Chinese knowledge is still more striking; and this decline, to either extent of it, cannot be accounted for by the conflagration of books, as the Shoo-king, which contains the superior degree of information on the subject that is claimed for the earlier ages, is represented to have been recovered not long after that catastrophe.

The want of attention on the part of the Chinese to accuracy or truth, in recording celestial observations, is strongly exemplified in a curious incident related by P. Gaubil; of the reality of which there cannot be the slightest doubt, as it came within his own knowledge, and he certainly was not disposed to exaggerate their faults. In the year 1725 there was an approximation to conjunction of the four planets, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and Mercury; and, such approximations being considered in China as favourable omens to the reigning sovereign, the Chinese astronomers,—in order to give this one the appearance of being still more auspicious, and thereby to ingratiate themselves with the emperor then upon the throne,—actually added the Sun, Moon, and Saturn to the list of heavenly bodies that approached to a conjunction, and registered an absolute conjunction of all seven! But when they could make so false an entry under the very eye of Europeans, how can we depend on their adherence to truth in times in which their deviations from it were less liable to exposure? Is it not perfectly obvious that astronomical registers, kept in this manner, can lend no support to history? The following is the passage of our author to which I refer:—
 “Les conjonctions des Planètes ont toujours été regardées comme d’un bon augure pour les princes; on a envoyé en France l’observation qui se fit ici en 1725 de l’approximation des 4 Planètes ♃, ♂, ♀, ☿. Les Chinois, pour faire leur cour à leur Prince, ont marqué une conjonction générale des 7 Planètes; et peut-être cette fausse conjonction marquée dans les Registres, fera faire bien de faux systèmes aux auteurs des siècles à venir.”—*Observations, &c. publiées par le P. Souciet*, tom. ii. p. 33. The admission at the close of this extract,—that the astronomical entry here described would, if relied on, lead future writers into error,—is perfectly just; but it might, in a great measure, be applied with equal propriety to all those framed by the Chinese: no dependance, it is evident, can be placed on any of them, unless verified through extrinsic means.

That the dates assigned to many of the Chinese astronomical treatises are spurious, is thus stated by P. Gaubil: “Le premier

calendrier étoit de *Hoang-ti*. Le second de *Tchouen-hiu*. Le troisième de *Yu*, fondateur des *Hia*. Le quatrième de *Tching-tang*, fondateur des *Chang*. Le cinquième de *Vouvang*, fondateur des *Tcheou*. Le sixième de *Tcheou-kong*, prince de *Lou*. On ne fut pas long-temps sans soupçonner au moins l'authenticité de ces ouvrages, d'ailleurs mal digérés, et on les regarde assez généralement comme des ouvrages du temps même des *Han*."—*Observations, &c. publiées par le P. Souciet*, tom. ii. p. 30. Where such a system of deception is carried on as to dates, how can we be secure of any being given correctly, till we come down to a very recent period? Surely we must distrust those dates, even if we had not, from other considerations, very decisive proofs of their general falsehood.

The extreme deficiency of the Chinese in astronomic science, as exposed in P. Gaubil's treatise, as also the foreign origin of the very little they know about it, are thus described by Delambre :—"C'est ici que se termine le *Traité d'astronomie chinoise* du P. Gaubil. On voit qu'il ne contient que des notions extrêmement vagues et aucun précepte, non-seulement dont on puisse faire usage, mais qui même nous donne la moindre lumière sur les connaissances des Chinois ; on peut donc, sans rien hasarder, prononcer que l'astronomie n'étoit pas encore née à la Chine, malgré les travaux d'un si grand nombre d'astronomes."—*Ast. Anc.* tom. i. pp. 390-1. "On voit enfin que leur connoissances ont pu leur être communiquées, soit par les Indiens, soit par les Mahométans, et qu'elles ont enfin été remplacées par celles des Missionnaires europeens."—*Ibidem*, p. 398. The silly and trifling nature of the materials of which the Chinese astronomical treatises are chiefly composed, may be collected from the description which P. Souciet gives of the difficulties to be encountered, in extracting from them any information of the slightest value, and in distinguishing the remarks on astronomy from such as relate to astrology ; the two subjects being blended together, and by far the greater space allotted to the latter. The following are his words upon this

subject, as they occur in the preface to his edition of P. Gaubil's work : " — il faut se mettre à lire un grand nombre de livres chinois et tartâres ; il faut déchiffrer les hiéroglyphes de ceux-là, débrouïller les mystères de ceux-ci ; dévorer une infinité de longs discours très-inutiles et très-ennuyeux pour trouver quelque chose de bon ; et pour découvrir un point de véritable astronomie, essayer cent chimères de l'astrologie judiciaire dans lesquels il est noyé ;—" *Préface*, p. v. Here, by the way, it may be added, that the very low state of mathematical science of every kind in China, is also attested in the same place in the following terms :—" Les mathématiciens chinois n'entendent presque rien à la théorie. Tante leur habileté consiste à savoir l'usage des tables européennes traduites en chinois ;—" *Préface*, p. ix.

The state of the medical art in China is thus described by P. Cibot :—" Les Chinois ont étudié la médecine dans la plus haute antiquité, et y ont excellé. Les savans mettent en question si les livres qu'on a aujourd'hui sous le nom de *Hoang-ti*, sont véritablement de lui. Quoi qu'il en soit de ce point, comme les livres de médecine furent exceptés de l'edit de proscription de *Tsing-che-hoang*, on ne peut douter que la Chine ne possède les plus beaux principes et les secrets les plus curieux de l'antiquité. Près de vingt siècles d'expériences et d'observations, ayant grossi ce trésor d'une infinité de découvertes, aucune nation certainement n'a rien qui puisse y être comparé."—*Memoires, &c. par les Missionnaires de Péking*, tom. viii. pp. 259–60. With this pompous eulogium on the *decided* superiority of the medical information of the Chinese over that of every other nation, let us now compare the simple statement of Gutzlaff, who was himself a physician, and gives his account of the matter from personal observation. "The diseases of the poorer classes here [that is, at Teen-tsin, a very large commercial town on the banks of the *Pei-ho*, within the distance of two days' journey from Pe-king] seemed as numerous as in any part of India. They generally complained of the unskilfulness of their doctors, whose blunders I had frequently to correct.

Chinese doctors are, usually, unsuccessful literati, or persons fond of study. They claim the title of doctor as soon as they have read a number of books on the subject of medicine, without showing, by practice, that they are entitled to the appellation. Their minute examination of the pulse, which is frequently very correct, gives them some claim to the title of able practitioners. Anatomy, a correct knowledge of which must be gained from dissection, the Chinese regard as founded on metaphysical speculations, and not in truth. Their materia medica is confined chiefly to herbs, which are the principal ingredients of their prescriptions. They have some very excellent plants, but injure and weaken their effect by mixing them up, as they do, often sixty or seventy in one dose. They generally foretel the precise time of the patient's restoration, but are often found mistaken. To stand against men of this description, who are so very wise in their own imaginations, was not an easy task; but I always convinced them by facts, that our theories, when reduced to practice, would have the most salutary effect."—*Journal of three Voyages, &c.* p. 143.

Of the two representations which are so diametrically opposed to each other, the latter, as appears to me, carries with it internal evidence of its truth;—evidence too, which is strongly supported by the preference which, it is notorious, the Chinese people (whenever they can, in this respect, evade the orders of their government) give to European physicians, notwithstanding the violent prejudices they, in other respects, entertain against all foreigners. Of the eagerness with which they sought for the medical assistance of Gutzlaff, the following passage from Mr. Lindsay's Report, already referred to, gives a striking picture: "— during the whole period of our stay [at *Fuh-Chow*], the ship was daily crowded with visitors, and we made frequent long excursions into the neighbouring country; but I should be guilty of great injustice, if I omitted strongly to express my sentiments of the great advantages which have been derived from the services of Mr. Gutzlaff, to which, I consider, we were greatly indebted for the extraordinary degree of respect and

friendship shown to us by all classes of Chinese. Since the first day of our arrival, gratuitous medical assistance and medicines were freely given by him to all who applied for them; and during the three weeks we were at this place, rarely a day elapsed in which more than a hundred patients did not profit by his humane labours. The fame of this circumstance spread far and near, and in some instances attracted persons from the distance of more than fifty miles. In many cases of wounds and cutaneous disorders his practice was very successful, and it was most pleasing to behold the gratitude demonstrated by these poor people for their cure.”—*Report of Proceedings, &c.* p. 87.

But the study to which, next after that of reading and writing, the Chinese savans have devoted most attention, is the science of ethics; and as they boast of the political and moral treatises of Confucius and his immediate followers, as displaying a model of perfection, and the very *ne plus ultra* of human wisdom and learning, it is by reference to this standard of their own selection, and in a subject for their imagined proficiency in which they most pride themselves, that we shall get the clearest view of the very narrow limits and low quality of their literary acquirements. At first only a few of the maxims of the Chinese sage, and such as were calculated to make the most favourable impression, found their way to Europe in the accounts transmitted by the early missionaries, and these were so dressed up, or at least they were placed in so advantageous a light, as to excite very exaggerated notions of his talents and information; nor had the learned an opportunity of correcting the erroneous opinions into which they had been led upon this point, till P. Couplet, assisted by three other Jesuits, published in Paris, in the year 1687, his *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus, sive Scientia Sinensis Latine Exposita*. This volume contains a loose translation, or rather a paraphrase of three philosophical works of the highest repute in China; which, in fact, are there held in such estimation that every student who aspires to eminence in learning, is obliged to get them throughout by heart,

and commit them completely to memory. They are styled, 1. *Ta-hio*, or “the great science;” 2. *Chung-yung*, or “the middle path;” 3. *Lun-yu*, or “rational conversations:” and they constitute three parts of the Chinese classic work, *Se-shoo*, or “the four books,” the fourth part not relating immediately to Confucius, but to *Meng-tse*, a disciple of the sage’s grandson. The translation in question is, I have reason to think, in the main, a fair one, although its framers evidently wrote under the influence of strong prejudice; but the inferences which, in their observations upon the text, they attempt to draw from it, in many instances do not follow from what they have given us for its tenor; and assuredly men of their abilities would not have let this inconsecutiveness appear, if they were not above tampering with the original. Besides closer and more exact translations have of late years come out, which, though they do not constantly present to us the same meaning as this one, for every sentence,—a degree of congruity which the vagueness of Chinese writing renders very nearly impossible,—yet, for the most part, they agree with it in substance. For instance, Dr. Marshman’s versions of the *Ta-hio* and *Lun-yu* are published together with the original, and with explanations of the several characters that may be verified by reference to Morrison’s Dictionary; and as these versions justify in the main two parts of the Jesuits’ work, it is reasonable to conclude that the remaining part also has been executed with tolerable correctness.

The first of the above treatises, of which the substance is thus brought under the cognizance of readers unacquainted with Chinese, consists of a dissertation of Confucius (accompanied with a commentary by one of his disciples) upon the art of government; in which certainly one very just maxim is inculcated, namely, that no one is fit to govern others till he has first obtained a due control over himself. But as no practical details are here entered into as to the mode of governing ourselves or others, and the whole treatise consists merely in a continual round of changes rung upon the single idea just specified, I shall no farther dwell upon it than to subjoin, as a specimen,

part of the leading article, through the medium of Dr. Morrison's translation ; to which I give a preference for this purpose on account of its conciseness. " All things have an origin and a conclusion ; every affair has an end and a beginning. To know that which comes first, and that which is last, approximates to reason. The prince who, therefore, wishes that illustrious virtue may be understood under the whole heavens, must first govern well his own kingdom : he who wishes to govern well his kingdom must first regulate his family ; he who wishes to regulate his family, must first adorn with virtue his own person ; he who would adorn with virtue his own person, must first rectify his heart ; he who wishes to rectify his heart, must first purify his motives ; he who would purify his motives, must first perfect his knowledge ; knowledge has for its object the nature of things. The nature and substance of things first exist, and are afterwards known ; if known, the motive will be purified ; after the motive is purified, the heart will be rectified ; the heart being rectified, the person will be adorned with virtue ; when the person is adorned with virtue, then the family will be regulated ; when the family is regulated, the nation will be governed well ; when nations are governed well, under the whole heaven will be tranquillity and happiness."—*Horæ Sinicæ*, p. 21.

The second treatise deserves more notice, as it unfolds to us, though only in unconnected sentences, and not in a regular form, the principles of the moral system of Confucius ; and, what is still more interesting, will, I apprehend, enable us to trace this system to its original source. The very title of the work, " The Path of Moderation," reminds one of the Aristotelian ethics, which are founded on the maxim of avoiding all extremes ; and in both systems we find this maxim itself carried to an excess, and violated in the same manner, by the extreme position that even our love of virtue may be too great ;—an error in morality analogous to that in religion, of the theologians who held that just bounds may be exceeded in our love of God.

The first point to which I would here direct attention, is the very striking defect in the system of the Chinese sage, that he no where insists on, or even makes express mention of the existence of a supreme God, or the reality of a future state of retribution. P. Couplet, indeed, maintains, that in the last paragraph of the *Chung-yung*, the very important doctrines in question are put forward, or at least, may be thence fully deduced. Upon this assertion I wish the reader to form his own judgment. The following is the paragraph referred to:—
 “Concludit *Cu-su*,^a confirmatque dicta libri *Odarum* auctoritate; ubi (juxtà Interpretes) introducitur ipse *Xam ti*, supremus cœli Imperator loquens. Sic igitur Oda ait: ‘Ego (inquit supremus cœli Imperator) complector et amo *Vên vâm* Regis clarissimam et purissimam virtutem; et ideo quidem amo, quia illa non magnoperè personabat, ut forinsecùs perciperetur et appareret (vel ut alii explicant: quia illa non petivit suam magnitudinem à verborum sonitu et exteriori quadam specie ac splendore, sed è soliditate et cultu interiori).’ Nimirum, *Confucius* inquit, exteriora ista uti sunt sonitus verborum et splendor seu figura exterior, opes inquam, et arma, eloquentiæ vis, et imperatoriæ majestatis splendor, in ordine ad hoc ut moveatur et convertatur populus, sunt reverà quid posterius et ramorum instar; at verò solida illa cordis veracitas quæ verbis factisque se prodat, et aliarum quoque virtutum præsiidiis instructus animus, radix ipsa et fundamentum sunt, adeoque id quod prius ac præcipuum hîc censi debet. Alia Oda sic ait: ‘ejusmodi

^a In this old translation the Chinese words are expressed according to the Portuguese orthography. Thus of the above name the first element *cu*, which, taken by itself, denotes “a sage,” is written by the French *tsé*, and by the English *tse* or *tsze*; neither is its sound always represented in the same manner even by authors belonging to the same nation (which shows that there must be a diversity in the pronunciation of it among the Chinese themselves); it is written by Dr. Morrison *tsze*, and by Dr. Marshman *Chee*. The entire name, *Cu-su*, which the latter author writes *Chee-see*, is that of the grandson of Confucius. He is said to have compiled the *Chung-yung* from the papers of his grandfather.

virtus est subtile quiddam et leve instar pili.' Attamen (subjicit *Cu-su*) pilus quamvis reverà tenue quid ac subtile sit, adhuc tamen datur quidpiam sensibile quod cum eo ordinem habeat, eique comparetur et correspondeat: quapropter ad rem illustrandam magis appositum est carmen aliud quo dicitur: 'supremi cœli res longè fugit sensus humanos, adeoque nec habet vocis sonum quo audiri, nec odoris speciem qua percipi queat.' Ex quo (inquit *Cu-su*) confici videtur, ejusmodi rem summum quid esse humanis oculis invisibile, et indivisibile, adeoque omnia sensibilia transcendens; et hoc ultimum dictum rem maximè declarat."—*Scientia Sinensis*, lib. ii. pp. 93-4.

Tedious as is this passage, and stupidly unmeaning for the greater part, I have yet given the entire of it; to enable the reader to judge for himself, whether P. Couplet had any real ground for maintaining that it expressed, or even implied, the existence of a supreme moral ruler of the world, and the immortality of the human soul. Throughout the whole passage there is but one just observation, namely, that virtue depends more upon inward intentions than upon outward professions (rather a strange one, by the way, to come from a Chinese writer); but however correct this remark may be, still surely it has no connexion whatever with the great truths in question. Again, whoever *Xam-ti* may have been, surely the circumstance of his admiring the virtue of *Ven-vam*, a deceased emperor, affords no reason for inferring the continued existence of that emperor; his virtue, it is obvious, might be remembered and admired, quite independently of all consideration whether any part of him survived the dissolution of his body or not. The silly and trifling nature of the remaining observations is too prominently obvious to require that it should be pointed out; and without further delay I shall pass on to our translator's commentary. He commences with more particular explanations of some of the characters, which it would be useless to quote, as he has not afforded any means of judging of their correctness by subjoining copies of those symbols; and he then proceeds as follows:—
"Cæterum qualescunque demum sint expositiones istæ; certa

est res una, quod ex hac libri *Chum-yum* postrema sententia ternæ videntur elici posse veritates, ac Sinensibus, quamvis Ethnicis, probari; scilicet unius et supremi Numinis existentiam; et immortales esse mortalium animos; sua denique præmia cujusque meritis post hanc vitam respondere.”—Lib. ii. p. 94. The *certainty* attributed to those deductions is somewhat amusing, since the first of them alone has any visible connexion with the passage; and that too only through the medium of the very questionable assumption, that the speaker in the first ode quoted is *Xam-ti*, and that by this name is denoted the supreme God. The former part of this assumption the translator has himself virtually admitted to be doubtful by the qualification (*juxtà interpretes*) with which he has introduced it; and the latter is refuted by a statement made by him in his preliminary dissertation, that the name in question was given to several inferior deities by the *Taou-sze*, or most ancient and numerous religious sect in China. “Et hujus quidem sectæ consilio et industriâ, paulatim jam prisci reges quidam facti velut numina, et alii atque alii spiritus jam antea incogniti prodire, et quidem, sub titulo *Xam-ti* seu supremi cœli Imperatoris, qui singulis præessent singuli elementis, nullâ cum relatione vel dependentia ad supremam et unam in cœlo potestatem.”—*Proemialis Declaratio*, p. xxvi.

The Chinese part of the inscription on the Sino-Syriac monument serves, *ex abundanti*, to prove that the Chinese, previously to the arrival of Europeans among them, really had no idea whatever of a Being invested with the attributes of the true God. For if they had, they surely would also have had some name for this Being, and would have employed it in preference to a foreign one, when speaking of the great Jehova. Now they showed themselves ready enough to substitute national for Syriac names in the above-mentioned fabrication; as for instance, in their designation of the clergyman who presided over the erection of the monument, as also of the vicar-bishop, who at that time was at the head of the Chinese branch of the Syriac Church. Yet when they had occasion to specify the

true God, they gave him only a Syriac name, as they had it from the Jesuits, pronounced, after the western manner, *Aloho*; and they wrote this name according to a method which they apply to foreign ones alone, that is, with characters phonetically used.

On the other hand, in support of the views of P. Couplet and his associates may be urged the use which, it would appear, is occasionally made of the character read *Tëen*, to denote a supreme moral ruler of the universe, although it immediately and properly signifies only the material heavens. The best way of arriving at a just conclusion in this case will be, by viewing together the various significations of the character in question which bear upon this subject. All the meanings of this symbol have already been quoted from the Part of Dr. Morrison's Dictionary which is arranged according to the Radicals; of which those here referred to are as follows: "— is used for the material heavens, the sky; and for a supreme and intelligent power which views human actions and thoughts, and which rewards or punishes individuals or nations; for nature, as that word is often used in Europe, and seemingly to the exclusion of nature's God." This enumeration will be rendered more complete by subjoining the corresponding one from the Part of the same Dictionary which is digested according to the Chinese pronunciation of the symbols; it runs thus: "used for the material heavens, the sky; and for a supreme and intelligent power which views human actions and thoughts, and which rewards or punishes individuals or nations, but which seems to want personality. There is a great variety of expression and confusion of idea connected with the word." No wonder that there should be great confusion in the application of either verbal or written signs to a subject upon which such inconsistent notions are betrayed. God is here represented, in one description, as the material substance of the universe; in another, as nature, or the series of visible results that flow from the laws by which matter is regulated; in another again, as a supreme intelligent power. The idea of a god without personality, such

as is portrayed in the first and second parts of this picture, is too forced and unnatural to have ever entered the thoughts of common men; it must have originated with some sect or other of philosophers; and, what is very curious to observe, the precise counterpart of the portrait before us (or rather its original, for two so foreign from human apprehension, and yet so similar, could hardly have been drawn independently of each other) is displayed in the theological doctrine of the Stoics. Of this the reader may fully satisfy himself by consulting Cicero's second book *De Natura Deorum*, the best treatise on the subject which has reached our times. The Stoic will be there found sometimes maintaining the divinity of the universe—mundus—, and seriously arguing why this god should revolve round an axis and be spherical—volubilis et rotundus deus— (from which it is evident that by mundus he meant the very same god as the Chinese do by the material heavens); sometimes upholding nature as our god and supreme ruler—sequitur ut doceam omnia subjecta esse naturæ, eaque ab eâ pulcerrimè regi—; and at other times again, forgetting his own theories, and, through the force of innate conviction, acknowledging that the universe, his supreme god, was itself governed by a superior power—dico igitur providentiâ deorum mundum et omnes mundi partes et initio constitutas esse, et omni tempore administrari.

The two theological systems having been so far identified, it will help us to understand what the Chinese philosophers mean by a supreme intelligent power, if we search in the above treatise for the tenets of the Stoic upon this subject. We shall there find that, although he very justly reprehends the Epicurean for allowing that there are gods, and yet denying that they do any thing, or take any concern in what is going on in the world—qui deos esse concedant, iis fatendum est eos aliquid agere, idque præclarum—, still upon the point under consideration he, very inconsistently with his primary doctrine, falls into an error in common with the sage reproved by him, and admits a multiplicity of gods. In another respect also this notion of his concerning Providence is exceedingly faulty and imperfect;

for he held that the gods attend only to great concerns, and overlook affairs of minor importance—*Magna dii curant, parva negligunt*. When, however, we come to his more regular and formal theory on the subject, we meet, indeed, with one error corrected, in his stating that the world is governed by the providence of a single deity, instead of by that of a number of such beings; but then, this deity is only nature, to the exclusion of nature's God, and the providence contended for is only a physical, not a moral attribute (a position quite in keeping with another Stoical tenet, that all things are directed and controlled by fate, which is here kept in the back ground)—*Ipsius verò mundi, qui omnia complexu suo coercet et continet, natura non artificiosa solùm, sed planè artifex ab eodem Zenone dicitur, consultrix et provida utilitatum opportunitatumque omnium. Talis igitur mens mundi cum sit, ob eamque causam vel prudentia vel providentia appellari rectè possit* (*Græcè enim πρόνοια dicitur*), hæc potissimùm providet et in his maximè est occupata, primùm ut mundus quam aptissimus sit ad permanendum, deinde ut nulla re egeat, maximè autem ut in eo eximia pulcritudo sit, atque omnis ornatus.—*De Natura Deorum*, lib. ii. cap. 22. Such a providence as this, which is made to consist in merely the series of physical operations that arise from the various forces originally impressed upon matter, has, after all the boasting of the Stoic, no advantage, in reference to the controlling of human conduct, over the non-providence maintained by Epicurus. But Confucius really admitted no more than either of those philosophers, a moral government of the world directed by a supreme power; as is evident both from his studied silence upon the point, as a matter with which man had no concern, and from the confused and diversified ways in which, as Dr. Morrison complains, the Chinese express themselves upon this subject, just as the followers of Zeno did of old.

Upon the continued existence of the human soul after death, Confucius not only observes the strictest silence, but even gives his reasons for abstaining from the subject, in a passage which

P. Couplet has very candidly quoted from another work of the sage or his disciples, although it makes decisively against the views put forward by the learned translator. The following is the passage to which I refer : “ Verumtamen ne cuipiam videar hîc celasse quidpiam, vel subterfugisse, locum proferam, qui unus videri possit minùs favere sententiæ nostræ. Introducitur enim Confucii discipulus, *Cu-cum* vulgò dictus, ex magistro suo quærens, an mortui rerum notitiam conservent. Cui Philosophus, attemperare solitus responsa sua ingenio cujusque et cap-tui, tempori quoque et loco, sic respondet, ut tamen sciscitantis dubitationem non tollat. Si mortuis (inquit) perseverare noti-tiam rerum dixero, timeo ne filii quorum pietas erga parentes major fuerit, eosdem sociare velint, adeoque se ipsos interimant : si contrà, nullam esse asseruero, vereor ne languescat illa filialis pietas, et sint qui inhumatos etiam parentes abjiciant : desine ergo fili mi curiosiùs exquirere quæ sit vitâ functorum con-ditio : alia sunt magis necessaria quæ scire te velim.”—*Scientia Sinensis*, lib. ii. p. 97. The learned father in vain endeavours to evade the force of this passage by subjoining the remark, that Confucius here throws a doubt, not upon the continued existence of the soul after death, but only on its continued recollection of the past. “ Sic Philosophus ; ubi nota hoc loco non dubitari de existentia animarum, sed quæri à discipulo, an animæ defuncto-rum (quas supponit existere) conservent præteritorum notitiam.” But if the soul of the dead man should lose all memory of the past life, and so, beginning a new account, be wholly estranged from what it had felt and thought in the living man, then human agents would virtually cease to exist after death, and would feel scarcely more anxiety for the welfare of their surviving souls than if those souls belonged to quite different persons. The passage, however, has been here adduced prin-cipally on account of the curious specimen it affords of the very shallow reasoning of the Chinese philosopher ; for as to his practical disbelief in the existence of a God, and his disregard of the concerns of a future state, they are, without the addition of this positive testimony, sufficiently evinced by the total omis-

sion of those momentous subjects in the works written by him and his followers.

But to return to the translation of the *Chung-yung* by P. Couplet and his associates ;—this work appears to afford a satisfactory clue to the inquiry whence the ethics of Confucius were derived, and will, if I mistake not, enable me to trace them home to the tenets of the Eclectic or Neoplatonic School. In my analysis of the contents of the lately deciphered Hindu inscriptions, there have been laid open to view clear vestiges of the working of this school in India before the end of the sixth century of our era ; which serves to show by what route its disciples made their way to China. But even if we had not this aid to assist us in accounting for the matter, we still should be under the necessity of admitting that the motley system they supported, gave birth to the Chinese one ; for the peculiar features of the Græco-Egyptian parent are too strongly marked in its offspring to leave room for doubting of their connexion. The principle of the Eclectic philosophers was, as their name implied, to select whatever appeared to them best from the maxims of preceding sects, as well as from those of Christianity ; and while one party of them greatly corrupted the purity of the Christian faith by an infusion of their visionary doctrines, the other, consisting of those who still adhered to Paganism, opposed it on the ground, that, without its aid, they had formed an equally perfect code of morality ;—a ground which was most grossly false in both its parts, and which could have imposed only on very uncandid and prejudiced minds. How far human reason, unassisted by revelation, could advance in this investigation, is clearly shown by the philosophic works of Cicero, who was the most learned man of his age, and wrote shortly before the light of the Gospel was vouchsafed to the gentile world. On this account his descriptions of the various systems of the Greek philosophers is particularly interesting, as well as the view he has left us in his treatise *De Officiis* of his own system, which he in some measure formed on the same plan of selection as was afterwards adopted by the Eclectic sect. His classification of all the vir-

tues under the four heads of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, and Temperance, is too well known to require that I should quote it. These were acknowledged as cardinal virtues by all the leading sects, though by some of them very inconsistently with their principles (as, for instance, when Temperance was praised by the Epicureans); but no two sects agreed exactly as to the nature or relative importance of those virtues. The Stoics admitted no gradation in either virtue or vice; and as they held all crimes to be equal, so likewise they placed all the different specific virtues on a par. Their "wise man" possessed them all alike in perfection; and, accordingly, this *beau idéal* which their vain imaginations had formed, was never realized by any being that was merely human. The Peripatetics, or followers of Aristotle, held Temperance to be the chief virtue; while, on the other hand, the Platonists and Epicureans gave the preference to Prudence; but they both mistook its nature, though in different ways. The former sect understood by this virtue the mere abstract contemplation of truth;—an error which the latter sect so far corrected as to make it depend upon conduct, and consist in acting with a due regard to our own interest; but, then, they miserably perverted its nature in placing this interest, not in the possession of any solid and lasting advantages, but solely in the gratification of the senses. Cicero, who chiefly follows Plato, has adopted his views with respect to Prudence: "Ex quatuor autem locis, in quos honesti naturam vimque divisimus, primus ille, qui in veri cognitione consistit, maximè naturam attingit humanam. Omnes enim trahimur et ducimur ad cognitionis et scientiæ cupiditatem: in qua excellere pulcrum putamus; labi autem, errare, nescire, decipi, et malum et turpe ducimus."—*De Officiis*, lib. i. cap. 6. He has also, after the example of Plato and the Stoics, connected Benevolence with Justice. "Sed quoniam (ut præclare scriptum est à Platone) non nobis solùm nati sumus, ortusque nostri partem patria vindicat, partem amici; atque (ut placet Stoicis) quæ in terris gignuntur, ad usum hominum omnia creari, homines autem hominum causa esse generatos, ut ipsi inter se, aliis alii prodesse possent: in hoc naturam de-

bemus ducem sequi, communes utilitates in medium afferre, mutatione officiorum, dando, accipiundo; tum artibus, tum opera, tum facultatibus devincire hominum inter homines societatem.”—Lib. i. cap. 7. But still he has made this virtue inferior to Justice. “De tribus autem reliquis latissimè patet ea ratio, qua societas hominum inter ipsos, et vitæ quasi communitas continetur: cujus partes duæ sunt; Justitia, in qua virtutis splendor est maximus, ex qua boni viri nominantur; et huic conjuncta beneficentia, quam eandem vel benignitatem vel liberalitatem appellari licet.”—Lib. i. cap. 7. And in the prohibitory part of his rules for our treatment of others, he goes no farther than forbidding our doing to them any act of the rectitude of which we have a doubt. “—benè præcipiunt, qui vetant quidquam agere quod dubites, æquum sit, an iniquum. Æquitas enim lucet ipsa per se; dubitatio cogitationem significat injuriæ.”—Lib. i. cap. 9. I shall only add, that under the fourth head of Temperance he includes modesty and attention to decency, both of conduct and of language. “—in omnium quæ fiunt quæque dicuntur, ordine et modo, in quo inest modestia, et temperantia.”—Lib. i. cap. 5.

The Eclectic philosophers, as they were Platonists, retained knowledge abstracted from action, as one of their leading virtues; although it is plain that virtue cannot exist independently of the intention of the mind, which, in a moral point of view, is the most important part of action. Their chief improvement on the ethical system of Cicero consisted in the enlargement, in theory at least, of their Benevolence; which they raised to the head of the second class of virtues, essentially connecting it with Justice; and, under the prohibitory department of this head, forbidding to do to others, not only what the agent might have a doubt of as to its fairness, but also what in a similar case he would dislike to have done to himself. That they advanced so far in the theory of morals (which is all that is requisite for my purpose to insist on) must, I apprehend, be admitted; since they might easily have learned more in their controversies with Christians, and since, in fact, a higher degree of progress is

claimed for them by their admirers. But to support this representation of the matter by quotations from such of their philosophical disquisitions as are yet extant,—which are, generally speaking, exceedingly obscure,—would, I fear, prove too great a trespass on the reader's patience. I shall, therefore, content myself with laying before him, from the History of Philosophy by Dr. Enfield, the epitomiser of the learned Brucker, the following general account of the tenets of this sect :

“ The violent dissensions, which diversity of opinions produced in the Alexandrian schools, inclined many to wish for a general coalition of sects. This project appears to have been first formed by Potamo, and to have been carried into execution by Ammonius and his followers. The philosophy of Plato, already united with that of Pythagoras, was made the basis of this new system ; whence the sect was considered as a Platonic school, and its followers have been commonly distinguished by the appellation of the later Platonists. With the doctrines of Plato they attempted to blend those of Aristotle, who, from the time of Demetrius Phalereus, had been in high estimation in Alexandria. The Stoic system was also in the Eclectic school accommodated to the Platonic ; and the moral writings of the followers of Zeno were explained upon the principles of Plato. The only sect with which the Alexandrian school could come to no terms of agreement, was that of Epicurus, whose mechanical principles of nature were contrary to the fundamental doctrines of Platonism. It must be evident, on the most cursory view, that a method of philosophising which thus undertook to combine the tenets of different sects, could answer no other purpose than to confound all former distinctions, and give birth to new absurdities. In order to account still further for some of the more striking features of the Eclectic sect, it is necessary particularly to remark the arts which the leaders of this sect employed to obstruct the progress of the Christian religion. By *combining into one system all the important tenets*, both theological and philosophical, which were at that time received, either *in the Pagan or the Christian*

schools, they hoped to confirm the heathens in their attachment to their old superstitions, and to reconcile the Christians to Paganism. They endeavoured to conceal the absurdities of the ancient religion, by casting over its fables the veil of allegory, and thus representing them as founded upon important truths. The numerous train of heathen divinities they represented as emanations from the supreme Deity, through whom he himself was worshipped. That their system might, if possible, rival that which was taught in the Christian schools, they speculated, after the manner of Plato, upon divine and intelligent natures : *they even attempted to incorporate with their own dogmas several of the peculiar doctrines received among Christians, and made no scruple to deck themselves with borrowed ornaments, by imitating, on many occasions, the language of the Christian fathers.*"—*History of Philosophy*, vol. ii. pp. 90–2.

In reference to the beginning and, as far as it is directly known, the end of the history of this sect, I shall add a few particulars from the same author. "The Eclectic sect is not commonly known among ancient writers under any distinct name, for this obvious reason, that its most celebrated supporters chose rather to pass themselves upon the world as Platonists, than to assume a new title ; but, that the sect really existed as such, no one who attends to the facts by which its rise and progress are marked, can entertain a doubt. Diogenes Laertius relates, 'that not long before he wrote his *Lives of the Philosophers*, an *Eclectic sect* had been introduced by Potamo of Alexandria, who selected tenets from every former sect.' He then proceeds to quote a few particulars of his system from his *Eclectic Institutes*, respecting the principles of reasoning and certain general topics of philosophical inquiry ; from which nothing further can be learned, than that Potamo endeavoured to reconcile the precepts of Plato with those of other masters.^a The time

^a The following is the commencement of the passage of Diogenes to which Dr. Enfield refers, and the part of it which he has translated :—Ετι δὲ πρὸ ὀλίγου καὶ ἐκλεκτικὴ τις αἵρεσις εἰσῆχθη ὑπὸ Ποτάμωνος τοῦ Ἀλεξαν-

when Potamo flourished is uncertain. Suidas places him under Augustus; but it is more probable, from the account of Laertius, that he began his undertaking about the close of the second century.^a—*Hist of Philos.* vol. ii. pp. 61–2. It is, however, a point here of more interest to consider the last traces that have been preserved of this sect; upon which the following extracts from our author bear:—"The Eclectic school at Athens was continued by Marinus, a native of Sichem in Palestine, and a convert from the Samaritan to the Gentile religion. Towards the close of his life, Marinus, perceiving his health decline, was anxious to find a successor who might continue, with credit, what was called the chain of the Platonic succession; and for that purpose made choice of Isidorus, who soon afterwards removed to Alexandria, and left the Athenian school in the hands of Zenodotus, a pupil of Proclus. Isidorus, as we learn from his biographer Damascius, was a native of Gaza in Palestine, a city which retained the Gentile superstitions long after Christianity had been commonly embraced in the neighbouring countries. At Alexandria, whither he was sent by his parents for education, he was instructed in rhetoric and polite learning by Asclepiodatus, a Platonist; but he neglected these studies, that he might devote himself entirely to sublimer speculations. The fame of Proclus, as a preceptor in theology, soon induced him to repair to his school at Athens.

δρέως, ἐκλεξαμένου τὰ ἀρέσαντα ἐξ ἐκάστης τῶν αἰρέσεων.—*Proæmium*, § 21.

^a From the words already quoted from Diogenes it appears that he was not long preceded by Potamo. But Diogenes wrote in some part of the third century; as may be collected from the limits to the age he lived in, which his commentator Menagius has determined as follows. "Scriptorum qui ejus meminert antiquissimi sunt; Sopater Alexandrinus, qui, Photio teste, multa ex Vitis Laërtii suis doctrinæ variæ Eclogis inseruerat, quique Constantini Magni temporibus vixit, à quo interfectus est; Plutarchum laudat Laërtius in Speusippo et Anaxarcho; Favorinum passim; et Epictetum in Epicuro; unde his posteriorem fuisse constat. Vix enim est ut credam, vivos eos in testimonium adduxisse. Vixit Plutarchus sub Trajano; Favorinus sub Adriano; Epictetus vero usque ad Marci tempora vitam produxit."—*Ægidii Menagii Observationes*, &c. p. 1.

Relinquishing, however, for reasons which do not appear, the chair to which he had been appointed by Marinus, he returned to Alexandria. After a short residence in that city, he fled, with several other philosophers, into Persia, to escape the persecution of Justinian. About the year five hundred and thirty-three he returned from his voluntary exile. As Isodorus had been a pupil of Proclus, he must have been far advanced in life when he left Persia. The succession of the Platonic or Eclectic school in Alexandria terminated in Damascius, a native of Syria. He studied both at Athens and Alexandria, and in the latter school was a professor of philosophy, till he was driven into Persia by the severities which, as we have said, were exercised by the Emperor Justinian against the Gentile philosophers."—*Hist. of Philos.* vol. ii. pp. 85–6.

The measures which Justinian took for the suppression not merely of the Pagan philosophy, but of Paganism itself, within his empire, were, as they are described by Procopius, as well as by Theophanes,^a both severe and summary. Three months

^a Pagi gives the substance of the accounts of this matter transmitted by the above-mentioned historians, as follows. "Subdit Procopius: 'Hoc facto [that is, after the chastisement of the Samaritans just before described by this author] jam in Gentiles sævitiam convertit, quæ cæsis corporibus, quæ fortunis direptis; quorum qui nomina Christo dederunt, utpote qui per speciem, malorumque vitandorum id causâ fecissent, tandem inter libamina et sacrificia atque impias religiones deprehensi sunt.' Facit ad hanc rem quod Theophanes anno Incarnat. secundum Alex. DXXII Kalend. Septemb. superioris Christi anni inchoato, de Gentilibus habet: 'Hoc anno, qui octavæ Indictionis, adversus Gentiles et hæresim omnem Justinianus Imp. persecutionem movit, et eorum facultates ærario publico addixit. Tunc accusatus est Macedonius Exreferendarius, et Asclepiodotus Expræfectus, qui metu pulsus fidem amplexus est et obiit mortem [that is, he was *only* put to death, and not subjected to the torture of the Rack]; Pegasius etiam cum filiis inter procedendum examinatus est [on the Rack?]; Phocas etiam Patricius Crateri filius, et Thomas Quæstor, et alii comprehensi; quod maximum omnibus timorem incussit. Imperator autem solos Christianos, eosque recta in fide probatos, ad Communia et Curialia munera sustinenda admitti, Gentiles et Hæreticos ab eis amoveri lata lege sanxit; iisdem verò trimestre tempus ineundæ resipiscentiæ terminum ultimum præscripsit.'"—*Critica Historico-Cronologica in Annales C. Baronii*, tom. ii. p. 544.

were allowed to the Pagan for making up his mind about a change of religion ; and if he did not by that time arrive at a proper view of the subject,—the reader may easily conceive the consequence. It was, of course, during those three months that some of the Eclectic philosophers effected their escape to Persia. But what could have induced them afterwards to return within the grasp of the Roman emperor ? This I find explained in a curious passage at the end of the second book of Agathias, who takes up the history of Justinian from the point where Procopius leaves off. The passage begins with the names of the fugitives, their rank in the Eclectic school, and the cause of their flight. “ — Damascius the Syrian, and Simplicius the Cilician, also Eulamius of Phrygia, and Priscianus of Lydia, Hermias and Diogenes, both of them from Phœnicia, and Isodorus of Gaza. All these, the very highest flower, to express myself poetically, of the philosophers of our age, as the opinion which prevailed among the Romans respecting the supreme Being did not satisfy them —.” The narrative then, after describing the disappointment of the philosophers in not finding their situation in Persia as agreeable as they had expected, and their consequent determination to return to their former abodes, closes with the statement that Chosroes, who was then concluding a treaty of peace with Justinian, actually insisted upon the insertion among the articles of one in favour of these emigrants, in which it was stipulated, that they might end their days in peace at home, without being obliged to recant their religious opinions, but, of course, also without daring to promulgate them to others. “ Thus they all returned home, bidding farewell to the hospitality of the foreigner. They reaped, however, advantage from their emigration in no small or contemptible circumstance, but in one by means of which the remainder of life was passed by them in a way consonant to their opinions, and in the most agreeable manner. For, whereas at that period of time the Romans and Persians were making peace and articles of treaty, a part of their contents was the stipulation that those men, returning to their old accustomed abodes, should live thence-

forward among themselves without fear, not being compelled in any respect to adopt opinions contrary to those they approved of, or to change the creed that had been transmitted to them from their ancestors. For Chosroes did not give up the point that the truce should be confirmed and ratified in this too, as much as in any other article."^a So powerful a mediator could not be safely insulted, by violence offered to the persons of those whom he took under his protection; and, accordingly, his protégés were suffered to spend the remainder of their lives unmolested and in security. But they opened their school no more, and with them terminated the Eclectic sect within the limits of the Roman empire; nor is there any direct trace of its survival elsewhere. Upon this latter point, however, it is to be considered, how strong the improbability is of the old leaders of the school having fled to Persia alone, and unattended by any followers. The question, therefore, naturally arises, what is likely to have become of the younger and more enterprising members of the party. The cause assigned by Agathias for the anxiety of the philosophers to depart from Persia,—their disapproval of the customs and mode of life of the Persians,—is not a sufficiently pressing one to account for the sudden change

^a — Δαμάσκιος ὁ Σύρος καὶ Σιμπλίκιος ὁ Κίλιξ, Ευλάμιός τε ὁ Φρυγὴ καὶ Πρισκιανὸς ὁ Λυδὸς, Ερμείας τε καὶ Διογένης οἱ ἐκ Φοινίκης, καὶ Ισίδωρος ὁ Γαζαῖος. οὗτοι δὲ οὖν ἅπαντες τὸ ἄκρον ἄωτον, κατὰ τὴν ποίησιν, τῶν ἐν τῷ καθ' ἡμᾶς χρόνῳ φιλοσοφησάντων, ἐπειδὴ αὐτοῖς ἢ παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις κρατοῦσα ἐπὶ τῷ κρείττονι δόξα οὐκ ἤρεσκεν οὕτω τε ἅπαντες οἵκαδε ἀπενόστησαν, χαίρειν εἰπόντες τῇ τοῦ βαρβάρου φιλοξενίᾳ. ἀπώναντο δὲ ὅμως τῆς ἐκδημίας, οὐκ ἐν βραχεῖ τινι καὶ ἡμελημένῳ, ἀλλ' ὅθεν αὐτοῖς ὁ ἐφεξῆς βίος εἰς τὸ θυμῆρές τε καὶ ἡδιστον ἀπετελεύτησεν. ἐπειδὴ γὰρ κατ' ἐκείνο τοῦ χρόνου Ῥωμαῖοί τε καὶ Πέρσαι σπονδὰς ἔθεντο καὶ ξυνθήκας, μέρος ὑπῆρχε τῶν κατ' αὐτὰς ἀναγεγραμμένων, τὸ δεῖν ἐκείνους τοὺς ἄνδρας εἰς τὰ σφέτερα ἦθη κατιόντας βιοτεύειν ἀδεῶς τὸ λοιπὸν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς οὐδὲν ὀτιοῦν πέρα τῶν δοκούντων φονεῖν, ἢ μεταβάλλειν τὴν πατρίαν δόξαν ἀναγκαζομένους. οὐ γὰρ ἀνῆκεν ὁ Χοσρόης μὴ οὐχὶ καὶ ἐπὶ τῷ συστῆναι καὶ κρατεῖν τὴν ἐκεχειρίαν. —*Agathiae Scholastici* lib. ii. pp. 69–70.

of resolution adopted by them; and, as appears to me, they were much more likely to have been driven to it by coming into collision with the Nestorians; who then were very numerous in the Persian dominions, and just as hostile to the supporters of Pagan doctrines as the more orthodox Christians could be. But whatever may have been the reason which induced the professors of this sect to leave the country so abruptly, it must have operated with equal force upon their disciples; and while the former individuals, from the infirmities of age, chose the security of the West, though coupled with the condition of thenceforward observing the strictest silence, the latter, through the energy of youth, would naturally prefer facing the dangers of the East; as they would thereby retain the liberty of preaching their favourite tenets, and, every step they advanced, would get more out of the reach of their old adversaries, the Christians. These remarks, however, I admit to be merely conjectural, and entitled to no attention, if not supported by what shall presently be submitted to the reader's judgment.

I subjoin from the writings of an Eclectic philosopher a few brief extracts, as serving incidentally to show the general views upon the subject of morality, that were entertained by his sect in the latter part of the fourth century. These extracts are taken from the extravagant eulogy which Ammianus Marcellinus passed upon his patron, the Emperor Julian, after the death of that monarch:

(1) “ Vir profectò heroicis connumerandus ingeniis, claritudine rerum et coalita majestate conspicuus. Cum enim sint, ut sapientes definiunt, virtutes quatuor præcipuæ, Temperantia, Prudentia, Justitia, Fortitudo, . . . intento studio coluit omnes ut singulas.

(2) “ Dein prudentiæ ejus indicia fuere vel plurima, è quibus explicari sufficiet pauca. Armatæ rei scientissimus et togatæ; . . . studiosus cognitionum omnium.

(3) “ Quibus autem justitiæ inclaruit bonis, multa significant: primò quod erat pro rerum et hominum distinctione *sine crudelitate* terribilis; deinde, quod paucorum discrimine vitia

cohibebat; tum autem, quod *minabatur ferro potiùs quam utebatur*. Postremò, ut multa præteream, constat eum in apertos aliquos inimicos insidiatores suos ita consurrexisse *mitissimè*, ut pœnarum asperitatem *genuina lenitudine* castigaret.”—Lib. xxv. cap. 4. From the first sentence, here quoted, it may be seen that, when this Latin author wrote, the moral virtues were, by the Pagan philosophers of the Neoplatonic or Eclectic school, still comprised under the same general heads as in the time of Cicero; with no other difference than that of placing (in conformity with the doctrine of Aristotle) *Temperance*, or the refraining from all extremes, at the top of the list. The second shows that they still persevered in Plato’s strange mistake as to the nature of *Prudence*; and that which is marked (3), that they included under the head of *Justice*, not only mercy, but even some approach to forgiveness of injuries, or at least a certain degree of lenity in their punishment. It can, therefore, occasion no surprise, if we should find that, eventually, they changed their general denomination for the class of social virtues, and ranked them under *Charity* or *Love*.

Without further preface I beg to introduce to my reader the ethics of Confucius, as they are described and explained in the *Chung-yung*. This name is by some translated “the immutable (or constant) mean;” and by others the “middle path.” Either meaning is sufficiently warranted by the general tenor of the work; which shows that *Moderation* was with this sage, as well as with Aristotle, the great root of all virtue. Accordingly, after some preliminary observations of his Chinese commentator, his first words are thus given:—“Confucius ait: perfectus vir tenet *medium* semper et ubique; improbus vero prævaricatur *medium* vel excessu vel defectu.”—*Scientia Sinensis*, lib. ii. p. 42. And the importance he attaches to this virtue may be judged of by the praises he bestows on it. “Confucius ait: *medium* O quàm illud sublime! è vulgo pauci illud tenent.”—p. 43. “Orbis regna erunt equidem qui possint pacificè regere; dignitates et census erunt qui valeant recusare; nudos enses erunt qui possint fortiter calcare; at vero *medium*,

quamvis primâ fronte facile appareat, tamen non potest quivis nisi cum majori quodam certamine et labore obtinere.”—p. 44.

After all, the first and most prominent illustration of this extraordinary virtue, so difficult of attainment, is mere temperance in the use of food. “Quod verò passim sic peccetur, oritur ex defectu examinis; cum enim regula illa sit homini intima, actiones quæ à naturâ procedunt, utique non nisi ex dictâ regulâ plerumque procederent, siquidem hæc foret probè cognita. Ex. gr., inquit Confucius, hominum nullus est qui non bibat in dies et comedat; et tamen in re tam obviâ pauci valent dignoscere rectos sapes, seu rectum judicium ferre de potûs ac cibi tot condimentis, vitiati naturâ et efficacitate, quam si accuratiùs explorarent, non toties temperantiæ limites excederent.”—p. 43. What, however, our sage appears to lay the greatest stress on, is the abstaining from any unguarded word or emotion, and paying strict attention to decorum and etiquette. “Atque hæc est causa cur perfectus vir adeò semper sollicitè attendat sibi, atque invigilet in his etiam quæ non percipiuntur oculis, uti sunt minimi motus animi;”—p. 40. “Si verba proferenda priùs determinaveris, ac ea tecum ipse iterum iterumque repetens, quid, quomodo dicendum sit, planè definiveris, hoc ipso non cespitabis, nec in sermonibus tuis hæsitabundus offendes.”—p. 65.

This moderation should be observed even in the pursuit of virtue;—a position also maintained in the system of the philosopher of Stagira, and which certainly would be a very strange one to find in any two systems that were wholly unconnected with each other. “Causam item quare complures hanc medii viam, quamvis adeò conspicuam, non habeant perspectam, ego novi; sapientes enim, seu qui profitentur studium sapientiæ, medium suis factis excedunt et prætereunt, sive excessu ferè peccant.”—p. 43. “Confucius ait: sunt qui temerè transiliunt medii limites, dum sectantur virtutes nescio quas prorsùs inusitatas et reconditas, ac gaudent patrare miranda quædam, ut posterioribus sæculis sint qui nomen eorum deprædicent. Sed ego certè non fecerim ejusmodi rem:”—p. 45. And congenial

with this maxim is the disapproval of those who make any attempt above their strength, even though it should be in the path of virtue. “*Perfectus vir aggreditur viam ordinariam, et ideò in eâ constanter progreditur; at sunt qui vel inusitata et abstrusa, nec non majora viribus suis temerè affectant, vel tametsi virtutis viam eo, quo par est, modo sint ingressi, tamen in medio ipsius viæ cursum abrumpunt et turpiter deficiunt.*”—p. 46.

The wise man described by Confucius resembles the *vir sapiens* of the Stoics, not only in his possessing every perfection, as the very name given to him implies, but also in his being invulnerable to the strokes of adversity, and always happy, no matter in what circumstances he may be placed. “*Si versetur in ærumnis ac laboribus, agit pro ratione statûs ærumnosi, tenax semper magni propositi. Denique perfecto viro nullus est vitæ status quem ingrediatur, ubi non sit sui dominus et suâ sorte contentus; adeoque sibi succedat ex sententiâ.*”—pp. 48–9. The pride and vanity of our nature may have led men in different countries to draw this picture, without any communication with each other; but that they should hit upon the same illustration of virtue, and that too a very forced one, appears to be extremely improbable. Cato is represented in Cicero’s third book *De Finibus*, and sixth chapter, as adducing the following simile:—“*Ut enim, si cui sit propositum collineare hastam aliquò, aut sagittam, sicut nos ultimum in bonis diximus; sic illi facere omnia quæ possit, ut collineet; huic in ejus similitudinem omnia sint facienda, ut collineet, et tamen ut omnia faciat, quò propositum assequatur; sed hoc, quasi ultimum, quale nos summum in vita bonum dicimus; illud autem, ut feriat, quasi seligendum, non expetendum.*” Let this be compared with what follows:—“*Confucius ait: Sagittarius habet quandam similitudinem cum viro perfecto: ille si aberrat à depicto scopo, reflectens ad se exquirat erroris causam non ab aliâ quàm à suâ ipsius personâ; ita perfectus vir, si deflexerit à medii scopo, causam erroris sibi non alteri tribuit, adeoque à se rationem illius exigit.*”—p. 49. It is not, I admit, the same view of the

subject that is illustrated by those two similes; but still it is very difficult to conceive that the same figure should occur to Cato and Confucius, in explaining their respective notions of virtue; and, in particular, that the latter sage, who cultivated chiefly the pacific virtues, should of himself make choice, for this purpose, of imagery borrowed from the scenes of war.

But what I chiefly rely on for the identification of the Chinese and Eclectic systems of morality, remains yet to be laid before the reader. Hitherto it has only been shown that *Temperance*, understood in the sense of avoiding extremes, and adhering to the *constant, immutable mean* (*Chung-yung*), is the great fundamental virtue of Confucius; it is, indeed, so essentially connected with his general notion of virtue, that he expresses the idea of any moral failure in general, by the supposition of a deviation from this *mean*; as may be seen in the very last quotation. Where, by the way, in applying this supposition to the perfect man—*ita perfectus vir, si deflexerit a mediæ scopo*,—he directly contradicts his own theory, as well as that of the Stoics, from which it appears to be derived, respecting the wise man's absolute impeccability. There is no position more frequently to be met with in his writings, or more vitally connected with his system, than the one which is expressed in the following extract:—"Perfectus vir habet medium, sive *semper* est in medio, et quia perfectus est, ideo *semper* seu quovis tempore, adverso scilicet et prospero, conformat sese suasque actiones cum eo, in quo est, medio; idque cum eâ (de quâ suprâ) cautelâ, vigilantia, et timore circâ minimos animi motus."—p. 42. But passing by this glaring inconsistency of the Chinese sage, and bearing in mind that the main trunk of his tree of virtue is *Temperance*, let us proceed to the consideration of its leading branches, as enumerated in the ensuing quotation.

"Declarat hîc Confucius, quinque universalium regularum praxim dependere à *tribus virtutibus cardinalibus*; harum autem virtutum efficacitatem pendere ab unica animi soliditate ac veritate. Totius (inquit) orbis universales et obviæ regulæ seu

viæ sunt quinque : ea verò quibus practicè exercentur illæ, sunt tria. Quinque regulæ sunt videlicet, 1. Regem inter et subditum justitia ; 2. Parentes inter et filios amor ; 3. Maritum inter et uxorem debita à reliquis distinctio, seu fides conjugalis ; 4. Fratres majores natu inter et minores subordinatio ; 5. Denique mutua quæ amicos inter sunt concordia ac consuetudinis officia. Hæ quinque sunt orbis hujus generales viæ ac regulæ. At vero *Prudentia* in discernendo bonum à malo ; *Amor quidam universalis* ergà omnes ; et *Fortitudo* in prosecutione boni et fugâ odioque mali, tria hæc sunt orbis *Generales* seu *Cardinales virtutes*, per quas perfici debent quinque regulæ. Id verò, quo exercentur tres istæ virtutes est unum quid ; seria nimirum et vera cordis soliditas, veritas, et rectitudo ; nam si ex ficto et fallaci corde dictarum virtutum una procedat, ea profectò non erit virtus censenda sed vitium.”—pp. 61–2.

Amid the confusion and total want of metaphysical acumen betrayed in this passage, still, in the distribution it presents to us of the cardinal virtues, there may, I submit, be clearly traced and recognized the classification of them made by the philosophers of the Eclectic school. Confucius here calls universal rules, and makes to depend equally on all the virtues in question, what are in reality branches exclusively of the second virtue in his enumeration, and species into which it is subdistinguished, according to the parties between which it is to be exerted. And his limitation of those parties, in confining them to our rulers, our relatives, and our friends, shows very plainly how little he understood the true spirit of the divine precept of universal love which he has placed in his catalogue ; and, consequently, how little capable he would have been of originating the introduction of this precept into any moral system formed by himself without external aid. Thus of the *neighbour*, whom we are bound to regard and to treat with brotherly love, he, in his five rules, exposes as narrow and as bigoted a notion, as ever was entertained by the Jews of old. Towards the conclusion of the extract he contradicts the uniform tenor of the preceding part of his treatise, by making the root of all the other virtues

to be no longer *Temperance*, and by substituting for it in this office *Veracity*. But—as if he was conscious of his inconsistency, and apparently with a view to remedy the defect thence arising, as far as regards the part of the omitted virtue to which he attached most importance, that is, attention to decorum,—he in the next paragraph but one, by a strange jumble of ideas, ranks *Modesty* under the head of *Fortitude*! Here are the words of his translator: “Confucius, ut ostendat omnes, si modò velint, posse sic proficere ut tandem propè absint à dictis virtutibus, prudentiâ scilicet, amore et fortitudine, ait: quamvis rudis sit quispiam, si tamen amet ardeatque discere, nec fatigetur in studio virtutis, jam is appropinquat ad prudentiam; si quis amore privato sui ipsius adhuc quidem implicitus, tamen nitatur rectè operari, jam is appropinquat ad amorem illum universalem ergà omnes; si quis denique ita sit constitutus animo, ut constanter norit verecundari et erubescere, cum turpia et illicita proponuntur, jam is appropinquat ad fortitudinem.”—p. 62.

Here it is material to observe, that our moralist commits exactly the same mistake as the Platonists did in describing the nature of Prudence, by making it depend upon mere knowledge, abstracted from the consideration of conduct; as may be seen from both the last and the preceding quotation. Now even putting out of view his primary virtue,—over which, as to the origin he took it from, I admit, some obscurity has been thrown by his mode of treating the subject,—and confining our attention to the remainder of his system, surely we must be convinced that he and the Eclectic philosophers could not, by any possibility, have formed, independently of each other, plans coinciding in all the following particulars; in making the number of cardinal virtues the same (for when Confucius derives three from one distinct from them, no matter what that one may be, he in point of fact makes four);—in selecting at least three out of the four the same;—in arranging them in the same order;—in committing the same mistake, and that too a very unlikely one to be fallen into, with respect to the first of the three. To suppose that two systems agreeing so closely, and in so many

respects, were unconnected, would be nearly as absurd as to maintain that the Greek and Roman alphabets were constructed without any knowledge of the Phœnician or Hebrew one; neither could the Eclectic origin of the Chinese philosophy have so long escaped the penetration of European scholars, if they had not suffered themselves to be imposed upon by the artful misrepresentations of the mandarins, and by their plausible claims to an antiquity for their favourite sage which is utterly unfounded.

The partly Christian origin of the Chinese system of morals sufficiently accounts for the introduction into it of a precept, on account of which the Jesuits have lavished upon Confucius the most extravagant praise, and represented him as superior to all the Pagan sages of antiquity. That even a single fine thought or noble sentiment should have emanated from this philosopher, would, indeed, appear very strange to any one who impartially examines his writings; but let us look to his way of conveying the precept in question, and see whether the manner in which he has expressed himself upon the subject, does not betray an ignorance of the true spirit of the rule, which is totally incompatible with the supposition of its having been discovered by the unaided efforts of such an intellect as his. The following are his words upon this point, as they have been translated by P. Couplet:—"Confucius, ut probet omnes promiscuè ad eam, quæ homini insita est, regulam suo modo posse pertingere, explicans illud axioma, *quod tibi non vis fieri, alteri ne feceris*: sic ait: Regula rationis (quæ versatur, ex. gr. inter regem et subditum; inter patrem et filium; maritum et uxorem; majores natu et minores; denique amicos inter) non longè abest ab ipsomet homine; illa verò, quam homines sibi fabricant, regula, et longè abesse volunt ab ipsomet homine (cujusmodi sunt *exotica* et ardua quædam principia, quæ modò dictis quinque hominum ordinibus handquaquam concordant) non potest censerì regula et ratio."—p. 47. Here we find, indeed, an immediate corollary from a divine precept of our Saviour ("All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye

even so to them."—Mat. vii. 12), which, however inferior it is to its original, is still far above any rule for the conduct of men towards each other, that was ever enjoined by merely human moralists. But we also see that Confucius puts exactly the same narrow and illiberal limitations upon this version of the Christian precept, as he does upon the virtue of benevolence; and, moreover, he not only expressly disapproves of a more extended application of the rule, but also, I conceive, suffers the secret to escape from him that he had met with it, and in a less mutilated form, in some foreign system;—a secret which is now laid open, quite independently of his unguarded admission.

I shall detain the reader no longer with the *Chung-yung*; as the only interest, I apprehend, that can be taken in the work, lies in the circumstance of its enabling us to trace the Confucian ethics to their source, and for this purpose enough of it has been already extracted. For the remainder, therefore, of my exposé relative to the Chinese sage, I proceed to the third of the moral treatises proposed to be considered, the *Lun-yu*; which, by placing him before us in familiar conversation with his friends, gives a closer view of his character than either of those previously consulted, and shows more clearly the very narrow limits of his information, and the extreme frivolity of the subjects which principally engaged his attention. Still farther, by making use of Dr. Marshman's translation, in preference to that of the Jesuits, on account of its more close adherence to the original, I shall be able to convey an idea of the turn of thought and style of expression which distinguish the sayings of Confucius, and so to exhibit the nature of the eloquence which is held in highest estimation by his countrymen. If the reader should feel disappointed with the poverty and homeliness of the language in some of the following extracts, I request him to bear in mind that the blame of this is not to be laid upon the translation; which might easily have been written in a form more suited to European taste, but certainly would not then have presented as true a picture of the original, as it now does. Of the value of literal versions, in

giving the most correct view of Chinese literature that can be obtained without the immediate study of Chinese writing, Dr. Morrison, no bad judge or low authority upon the point, has expressed the following opinion, when accounting for the mode of translating adopted by himself in his Dictionary:—"In extenuation of the stiffness and occasional harshness of the style in this Work, it may be said that, as long as the sense of the English sentence is apparent, a literal and idiomatic translation of Chinese sentences is much better for a student than a free and vague translation, which contains generally the idea of the original, but nothing of the manner. A man who wants to learn the language of Confucius, had better hear him with a little of his Chinese idiom (call it broken English if you will), than listen to him speaking in the most classical English style. Although a free translation is always more easy than a close translation, the Author prefers the latter, because he thinks it more calculated to answer the end proposed."—*Morrison's Dict.* Preface to Part II. vol. i. p. ix.

The first of the following extracts is selected, to show that Temperance, understood in the sense of the Aristotelic virtue of Moderation, or abstaining from all extremes, is really the great fundamental moral principle of the Chinese sage, in the *Lun-yu*, as well as in the *Chung-yung*; from which there is, I conceive, good reason to suspect that, in the most remarkable of the passages I have quoted from the latter work, he substituted Veracity for Temperance, either to conceal the source of his system, or to lay ground for a claim to originality in, at least, some part of it. The second is chosen, to show the nature and extent of his Benevolence and Fortitude; the third and fourth, to exhibit the frivolity of his illustrations of the virtue of Generosity; and the remaining quotations are taken in their order, and very nearly at random. The references are to the sections of the work as it is divided in the Original, rather than to the pages of the Translation; and when any of the Chinese explanatory observations are given, they are distinguished from the parts of the text to which they are subjoined, by the term *comment* prefixed to them.

L. iii. c. ii. § 27.—*Chee* [written by Dr. Morrison *Tsze*, the third element of the full name *Kung-foo-tsze*, and that by which the Chinese sage is most usually designated in the *Lun-yu*] says: “in the *middle*, the exact point, consists rectitude; to arrive at this is the great object; among men few long remain here. *Comment.* The sage in this sentence deplores the state of his countrymen, saying: among them, all act contrary to that which is right; *they either err by exceeding the bounds of their duty, or else fail of coming up thereto.* Yet in the middle point alone is rectitude found; it neither allows of excess nor defect. But how few are to be found who continue long at this point. !

L. iii. c. ii. § 24.—*Choy-gno* enquiring said: if a man bring intelligence to one possessing complete virtue, saying, “a man is fallen into a well,” would he descend into it (to save him)? *Chee* says: why should he do this? The honourable man might send a proper person; he would not plunge himself into needless danger. He might put himself to some inconvenience, (but) he would not madly endanger his own life. *Comment.* *Mong* denotes that opposition to reason which would appear in a man's throwing himself into the well, under the idea of delivering another fallen into it; for by this step he might endanger his own life.

L. iii. c. i. § 23.—*Chee* says: who calls *Mee-sung-kou* a good man? A certain person begged some vinegar; he begged some of his neighbour and gave (to him). *Comment.* The paternal name of this man was *Mee-sung*, and his proper name *Kou*; he was a mandarine of the *Loo* country, whom men in general extolled. When a man of *Loo* came to ask him for a little vinegar, he, to preserve his own, went to his neighbour's house to obtain a little for him. The sage made this observation, smiling at the indirect manner in which he gratified the man. To give to a needy person at the expense of another is by no means generous. *Chung-chee* says: *Mee-sung-kou's* fault, though small, was enough to destroy the fame of his generosity.

L. iii. c. ii. § 3.—*Chee-wa* had been sent (by *Hoo-chee*) into the *Chhi* country. *Nim-chee* wanted for his mother some

rice (of the sage). *Chee* said: give her a *hoo* (of rice). He wanted more. *Chee* said: give her an *ee*. *Nim-chee* gave her five *pung* of rice. *Comment*. *Chee-wa* was *Koong-see-chuk*; he was employed by *Koong-chee* to travel into the *Chhi* country; and his friend *Nim-chee* asked rice of the sage, in behalf of his mother. The sage said: I give her a *hoo*, i. e. six *tou* and four *sung*; although he saw it was not necessary to give her any. *Nim-chee* still asked more; upon which the sage said: I give her an *ee*, i. e. sixteen *tou*; although he knew it was not needed. Not satisfied with this allotment, *Nim-chee* gave her (out of his own) five *pung*, or eighty *tou*. But did he not act wrong in thus exceeding the sage's direction?

L. i. c. i. § 10.—*Chee-khum* enquiring of *Chee-koong*, says: the Master, arriving in this country, will hear of its affairs. Will he enquire (of the ruler) or the reverse? *Comment*. *Chee-khum*'s paternal name was *Chhun*; his proper name *Khong*. *Chee-koong*'s paternal name was *Tuen-mook*; and his proper name *Chee*. Both were *Koong-chee*'s disciples. Some say, however, that *Khong* was *Chee-koong*'s disciple; but this is not certainly known. [How extremely important is all this!]

L. i. c. i. § 15.—*Chee-koong* says: the *See* has it written: "First cut, then smoothe; carve, then polish." This is rightly said.

L. i. c. ii. § 2.—*Chee* says: the *See* has three hundred sections. He adds: could they be included in one word, I should esteem it not evil. *Note of translator*. This extremely elliptical and obscure passage may be also rendered thus: "— including them in one word," he says, "I esteem them not evil." And indeed the comment seems rather to favour this sense. The Chinese teacher, however, says, that Confucius meant to convey a censure of some parts of the book.

L. i. c. ii. § 4.—*Chee* says: at fifteen, my desire was toward learning; at thirty, my mind was fixed; at forty, I had no doubt; at fifty, I understood the heaven-derived rule; at sixty, the ear received every thing with ease; at seventy, the desires which proceeded from the heart, transgressed not the law.

L. i. c. ii. § 10.—*Chee* says: observe what a man does; observe whence his actions proceed; observe carefully his recreations. How can a man remain concealed? *Comment.* This sentence is weighty, and is both deep and clear. *Chung-chee* says: this is within a man's own power. If a person enter fully into the meaning of this maxim, he can thereby decide on a man's habits and character, even as did the sage.

L. i. c. ii. § 24.—*Chee* says: to worship at a temple not your own, is mere flattery. *Comment.* "A temple not your own" means a temple at which it is improper for a man to worship. *Note of translator.* This is said to refer to the paternal pagodas, of which each family has one, in which the names of its ancestors are preserved and revered; and all of that family or name are required by custom to worship there.

L. ii. c. i. § 4.—*Lum-fong* enquired respecting the essence of reason and propriety. *Chee* says: you ask much indeed. Reason, in the height of joy, teaches moderation; when in a state of mourning, it dictates proper sorrow. [Here again it may be perceived, that, where the sage has no motive for misrepresenting his theory, the primary and most essential virtue in his system is the Aristotelic one of avoiding all extremes.]

L. ii. c. i. § 6.—*Qui-see* was worshipping in the mountain *Thay*. *Chee*, speaking to *Gnim-yaou*, says: O you! are you able to help him? He answering said: I am unable. *Chee* replied: Alas! He added: *Thay-san* is not like *Lum-fong*. *Note of translator.* By *Thay-san* the sage characterizes *Qui-see*, who was worshipping there.

L. ii. c. i. § 9.—*Chee* says: of the manners of *Ha* I am able to speak; *Kee* I cannot describe. Of the manners of *Yun* I can speak; *Soong* I cannot describe; for the register-book I cannot examine. Could I do this, I could then decide. *Note of translator.* The idea seems to be, that the philosopher could not vouch for the prosperity of any country, any farther than he was able to ascertain the state of its manners.

L. ii. c. i. § 16.—*Chee* says: in discharging the bow, strike not through the target. The strength of all is not equal. This

is the ancient way. *Note of translator.* The idea of the sage, in this passage, seems to be that of exhorting men *to observe the golden mean*; and *to be careful lest their virtues should lose their nature, by being carried beyond due bounds.*

L. ii. c. i. § 21.—*Oi-koong* asked *Choy-gno* respecting the *seah* [a small pagoda set up in the fields with the view of procuring plenty]. *Choy-gno* answering said: *Hou-see*, the ruler of *Ha*, planted the *choong* tree (before it); the *Yun* ruler, the *pak* tree; the *Chou* ruler, the *lut* tree. He added, “to inspire the people with fear.” *Comment.* *Choy-gno* was Confucius’s disciple; his proper name was *Ee*. These three princes planted each a different kind of tree before it: the *seah*, or temple, indeed, was anciently fixed, although different trees were planted before it. *Choy-gno* said, that *Chou* planted the *lut*, or thorn tree, with the idea of filling the people with fear. But he was mistaken, and answered improperly.

L. ii. c. ii. § 15.—*Chee* says: *Chham*, you know my way to perfection. *Chung-chee* says: Yes. *Comment.* *Chham* was the proper name of *Chung-chee*. Yes, a word of affirmation excluding doubt. *Chung-chee* entered deeply and clearly into the ideas of the sage. [What very profound thoughts are here expressed!]

L. iii. c. i. § 3.—*Chee-koong*, interrogating the sage, said: *Chhee*, what is he like? *Chee* says: thou art something of value. He says: what thing? The sage replied: thou art (valuable as) *hoo-lin* (vessels used in sacrifice).

L. iii. c. i. § 9.—*Choy-ee* slept in the afternoon. *Chee* says: rotten wood is unfit for carving; a wall of dirty earth cannot receive a beautiful colour. To *Ee* what advice can I give?

L. iii. c. i. § 11.—*Chee-koong* says: (as) I do not desire men to injure me, I also by no means desire to injure men. *Chee* replies: *Chhee*, thou art unable to realize this.

L. iii. c. i. § 19.—*Qui-mun-chee* reflected thrice, and then proceeded to action. *Chee* heard, and said: reflect perpetually; this best answers the purpose. *Note of translator.* Some understand this passage in a different sense. By “three times,” understanding an indefinite number, they interpret

Choi [above translated *perpetually*], which literally means *repeated*, as denoting only twice; and thus understand the sage as blaming *Qui-mun-chee*, for hesitating so long before he proceeded to action. The former sense is here preferred, as most agreeable to the comment; but the latter is subjoined, that the curious in Chinese may judge for themselves. [This is a tolerable specimen of the *great precision* of Chinese writing!]

L. iii. c. ii. § 4.—*Chee*, speaking of *Choong-koong*, said: though men wish not to use for sacrifice the calf of a party-coloured cow, even when its colour and horns (are proper), the mountain and river (deities) accept it.

L. iii. c. ii. § 5.—*Chee* says: *Hooi's* heart was three months (i. e. a long time) without deviating from perfect virtue; others might continue for a day, a month, or thus.

L. iii. c. ii. § 8.—*Pak-gnou* was sick. *Chee* enquired respecting him, and, from the window taking hold of his hand, said: he is a dead man inevitably! Alas! that this man should have such a sickness! that this man indeed should have such a disease! *Comment.* *Pak-gnou* was a disciple of *Koong-chee's*; his paternal name was *Gnin*; his proper name, *Kung*; and his literary name, *Pak-gnou*. This man at that time laboured under a dreadful eruption. "The window" here means the south window. It was the custom for the sick to sit or lie at the window on the north side, in order to leave the south side for the great men who came to visit them. The sage saw that this disciple moved to the north side, in order that he might take the seat of honour on the south side; for *Pak-gnou* wished to manifest toward his master the respect due to great men. *Koong-chee* did not, however, judge this proper; and, therefore, did not enter the house, but took his hand from the window. [What a heartless scene is here laid before us! and how degraded must be the taste and feeling of a people who could admire such a description as this! when his friend is in the last agonies of parting life, the whole attention of the sage, as explained by his commentator, is turned to a mere point of etiquette. From this anecdote it is tolerably plain that Confucius

really had no belief in a future state of existence ; for if he had, surely some observation respecting it would have been made by him upon such an occasion.]

L. iii. c. ii. § 15.—*Chee* says : who is able to go out without passing the door ? why then not walk in this the path of virtue ?

L. iii. c. ii. § 23.—*Chee* says : a cornered vessel without its corners, how is it a cornered vessel ! How is it indeed a cornered vessel ! *Comment.* *Koo* is a vessel which has corners ; *put koo* denotes one deprived of its corners, either by frequent use, or by accident. Some say, the sage here meant a vessel used for wine ; some, that the word denotes one made of wood ; but all say, it denotes one with corners. The sage says : when, in process of time, such a vessel has lost its distinguishing characteristic, how can it be termed any longer the same thing ? [The reader may, perhaps, find it difficult here to determine, which is more to be admired, the importance of the maxim, or the beauty of the figure by which it is conveyed.]

L. iv. c. i. § 1.—*Chee* says : I revise and correct ; I do not compose. I credit and highly venerate the ancient sages. The great exemplar to me is *Lou-phang* [one of those sages]. *Comment.* It is evident from the *Tay-ly*, that *Lou-phang* also revered the ancients, admired their wisdom, and constantly availed himself of their labours. *Koong-chee* corrected the *See* and the *Seu*, revised the *Ly*, and also the *Gnok* ; illustrated the *Chou-uk*, and compiled the *Chun-chou* from records and traditions relative to the ancient emperors. Thus he scarcely composed any thing of his own ; and, therefore, ingenuously confessed, that only the ancient emperors and sages were worthy of being esteemed originals, and that he received his ideas from them. [There is at least one erroneous impression conveyed in the text, and another in the comment of this section. The Pagan schools of philosophy were finally suppressed in the Roman empire about the year of our Lord 532 ; and it is very possible that some of the successors of the Eclectic philosophers who then fled to Persia, or their treatises on morality, may have reached

the countries bordering on China long before the age in which Confucius lived. He may, therefore, have been warranted in calling the sources of his information upon ethics, *ancient*; but he certainly had no right to represent them as *national*, and has, in at any rate one place, already pointed out, admitted them to be *foreign*. With respect to the historic work, the *Seu*, or, as it is more commonly written, the *Shoo-king*, which is stated in the comment to have been corrected by this sage, I have already shown, that it was not fabricated till many ages after his death.]

L. iv. c. i. § 7.—*Chee* says: if a man come himself, bringing a *present* to his master, I will by no means refuse to instruct him. [The original is coarser; for in it the two characters here read a *present*, literally denote a particular quantity (about twenty pounds) of bacon. The philosopher, it appears, was not quite disinterested in his motives for giving instruction.]

L. iv. c. i. § 8.—*Chee* says: to those who do not strive to learn, I do not unfold my ideas; those who open not their minds, I do not labour to instruct. When I describe one corner, if the pupil comprehend not the other three, I do not repeat my instructions.

L. iv. c. i. § 14.—*Nim-yaou* (one day) says: does *Hoo-chee* approve of the present ruler of *Wye*? *Chee-koong* replied: Humph; I must enquire.

L. iv. c. i. § 18.—*Ip-koong* enquired of *Chee-loo* respecting *Koong-chee*. *Chee-loo* did not answer him.

L. iv. c. i. § 20.—*Chee* conversed not about curious arts, nor brutal strength, nor insurrection, nor the deity. *Comment*. *Chea-see* says: a wise man discourses with pleasure respecting probity, goodness, urbanity, prudence, and sincerity; he forbears to discourse on juggling and seducing arts; he discourses of virtue, rather than strength; of order and peace, rather than tumults and insubordination; and of man, rather than the deity. [It is here plainly intimated that the morality of Confucius had no foundation in religion. The character read by Dr. Marshman *the deity*, may be understood in either the singular or plural number; P. Couplet has translated it *de spiritibus*.]

L. iv. c. i. § 30.—*See-pai*, a mandarine of *Chhum*, enquired: does *Cheu-koong* understand propriety? *Koong-che* replied: he is acquainted with propriety.

L. iv. c. i. § 34.—*Chee* falling sick, was ill for a long time. *Chee-loo* wished him to supplicate the deities. *Chee* says: is there any authority for this? He replied: there is; the *Loi* says: “supplicate (the deities) above and beneath, the celestial and the terrestrial.” *Chee* says: *Mou* [a name he made use of in speaking of himself] has done this a long time ago. *Comment.* The sage at this time had no evil deeds to forsake; his conduct was one continued course of virtue, and perfectly acceptable to the gods. He, therefore, says: *Mou* has in this manner supplicated the deities long ago [and, consequently, his doing so in a more direct manner by means of prayer was, it seems, quite unnecessary].

L. iv. c. ii. § 4.—*Chung-chee* was sick; *Mung-kung-chee* enquired (how he was). *Chung-chee* replying, said: when a bird is near death, his note is plaintive; when a man is near death, his counsel is virtuous.

L. iv. c. ii. § 8.—*Chee* says: begin early to study the *See*; be thoroughly fixed in the *Ly*; become thoroughly acquainted with music.

L. iv. c. ii. § 15.—*Chee* says: the musician *Chee's* first (effort), his close of the air of “*Quan chee*,” how pleasing! how satisfying to the ear!

L. v. c. i. § 2.—*Chee* says: a head-dress made of fine cloth was (once) the custom; now one made with silk is worn. It is less expensive; let me imitate the multitude. Formerly, to do obeisance to the ruler below (the steps of the palace) was the custom; now obeisance is rendered after ascending (them). This is haughtiness. Though I act contrary to all, I will adhere to the ancient custom.

L. v. c. i. § 11.—*Chee-koong* says: one who has a precious jewel in his possession, folds it up, and deposits it in his cabinet; he then seeks a valuable price, and sells it. *Chee* replies: I sell my jewel; I certainly sell. I wait for a price, however [namely,

twenty pounds of bacon; and a dear price it was for any thing he could teach, except to a people sunk in the lowest state of ignorance].

L. v. c. i. § 12.—*Chee* wished to reside in a strange country. One observed: wretched (are foreigners). How can any one (dwell among them)? *Chee* replied: in dwelling among foreigners, what of wretchedness does the honourable man experience? [This intimates how he may have arrived at foreign instruction.]

L. v. c. i. § 15.—*Chee* being upon a river, says: in this manner does the river perpetually flow! It stays not day or night!

L. v. c. ii. § 3.—When his [*Chee's*] prince appointed him to receive a person come from a distant country, he did it composing his countenance, thus; and walking slowly, thus. He with joined hands bowed respectfully to those standing either on the left or the right hand; his robes before and behind adjusting, thus. Even when hastily entering (any part of the palace), he lifted up his hands by way of salutation, thus, as a bird moves its wings. The guest having departed, the sage would repeat his last commands, saying: "the guest is not in sight."

L. v. c. ii. § 4.—Entering the door of his prince's palace, he bowed himself, thus; in this manner contracting his stature. When standing, he did not place himself in the midst of the door; in walking in, he did not tread on the threshold. Passing by the (empty) seat of the prince, he formed his countenance, thus; and adjusted his feet in this manner. His words he suppressed, as though unable to speak. Gathering up his robe, he entered the palace bowing himself, thus; he also restrained his breath, so as not to breathe out. Going out, he, after descending one step, relaxed the gravity of his countenance; appearing at ease, thus. Having descended to the bottom of the flight of steps, he, expanding his arms, appeared thus, like a bird set free. Returning to the tribunal, he again resumed his gravity, thus.

L. v. c. ii. § 6.—The honourable man [i. e. Confucius], in time of mourning, did not adorn himself with light green or deep red.

Red and flesh-colour he did not wear on any occasion. In the hot season, when he put on a single garment, whether fine or more open and coarse, he chose to wear it as an upper garment, and place it without. [That is, says the commentator, he put on some garment underneath. But then, how could the one first mentioned be called a single garment?] Black robes he trimmed with the skin of the black antelope; plain robes, with that of a white fawn; yellow robes, with the skin of the *hoo*. (*Comment.* A small animal found in the mountains, the skin of which is yellow.) His robes for common occasions were long; but short was the right sleeve. Robes of the skin of the *hoo* and the *lok* being thick and warm, he wore when sitting. The time of mourning being over, he neglected not to wear the usual ornaments. His lower garment, not plaited like that of a woman, he chose to have made close with triangular seams (or pieces). With black-furred clothes and a deep-red hat, he went not to the house of mourning. On the first day of the month, he chose to put on his court apparel, and repair to the palace.

L. v. c. ii. § 7.—When fasting, the sage chose to dress himself in clean apparel. The robe he chose for sleeping, exceeded, by one half, the length of his body.

L. v. c. ii. § 8.—Relative to food, he was not regardless of its goodness. Raw meat he did not neglect to have cut into fine shreds. (*Comment.* Mutton, beef, and fish, eaten raw, must be cut very small, that it may nourish a man.) Rice spoiled, or its taste changed; putrified fish; and meat spoiled, he did not eat. Meat of a bad colour, or a bad smell, he ate not. Food not properly dressed he did not eat. [How is this to be reconciled with the previous statement that he ate raw meat cut in very small bits?] Untimely fruits he ate not. Meat not cut rightly he did not eat. Not having the proper sauce, he ate not. Flesh, although abundant, he did not suffer to exceed a due proportion in his food. Wine he did not refuse; but suffered it not to affect his reason. Purchased wine, or dried provisions purchased, he did not eat. (*Comment.* Because they might not be clean.) In eating he did not omit ginger. (*Comment.* Ginger enlivens a man, and dispels bad humours; the

sage, therefore, did not neglect it.) After worshipping with the prince, he did not reserve the offerings for himself alone. The meat offered by himself in worship he kept no more than three days; if it remained three days, he eat it not. In eating he conversed not; while reposing he spoke not. Though it were the lowest food, vegetables or broth, he chose to pour out a part of it, by way of libation. He chose thus to manifest his devout veneration for his deceased ancestors. [From the real opinions of Confucius, as exposed in former extracts, it is evident that he joined in the performance of worship along with his sovereign, merely as a business of state ceremony; and that he poured out libations to his deceased ancestors only in compliance with what, disbelieving as he did in the existence of the soul after death, he must have thought a popular superstitious error.]

L. v. c. ii. § 9.—The table not being right, the sage did not sit down. *Comment.* The sage's heart delighted in whatever was right; hence, when the table in the place of sitting, was placed but a little awry, he would not sit down thereto.

L. v. c. ii. § 12.—The stable was on fire. *Chee* coming from the palace, says: are the men injured? He did not enquire respecting the horses. *Comment.* Not that the sage did not wish to preserve his horses, but he feared lest some man might have perished; hence he did not feel at leisure to inquire respecting the horses.

L. v. c. ii. § 16.—Present at an excellent dinner, the sage chose by his countenance to express approbation; and, rising, sat down again. [Had he his deep-red hat on, he would of course, when he stood up, have taken it off with a low bow, upon so interesting and important an occasion.]

*The works of Confucius, containing the original
Text, with a Translation, by J. Marshman, vol. i.*

I cannot better close these extracts from Dr. Marshman's translation than with the following critique; which, if the censure it conveys be transferred from the translator to the original writer of the *Lun-yu*, will present to us a very just, as well as lively, description of the nature of Chinese ethical learning, and

of Chinese eloquence. Dr. Marshman, indeed, did not himself see the full bearing of his own work ; but he honestly described matters as he found them, without attempting to accommodate his representation to the preconceived notions of Europeans ; and he left it to others to reap the fruit of his labours. That the true value, then, of this production should not be at first perceived, even by the best judges upon general subjects of literature, is not, I conceive, at all surprising ; and there is really so much of trash daily obtruded on the world, under the head of novelty, that the distrust with which publications leading to any innovation upon received opinions are viewed, is perhaps a wholesome one. This caution is of use to the public, though it bears hard against writers who have had the penetration to discover, and the courage to oppose, prevailing and cherished errors ; and who, in consequence, seldom live to see justice done to their efforts, and to reap that reward of general approbation which is eventually paid to their researches. Now for the critique in question.

“ The disciples of Confucius, in preserving his moral maxims, imitated his style. That a plain man like Mr. Marshman, in attempting to translate symbols of this description into the English language, without any knowledge of the peculiar tenets and habits of thinking which prevail among the Chinese, should altogether fail, and frequently write nonsense, is not in the least surprising ; but we confess that we were not prepared for the extremely mean and meagre dress in which he has exhibited these homely truths of the great sage : they are absolutely disgusting from their nakedness ; and we will venture to say, that the manual of a village schoolmistress or parish clerk never exhibited a set of maxims more trite and puerile than those to be found in every page, from the first to the last, of Mr. Marshman’s tremendous quarto. Confucius might in his time, and in the eyes of the unenlightened people among whom he dwelt, have been considered as a holy man, and a great philosopher ; but, judging him by his writings, we are perfectly astonished his name should ever have survived his natural life, much less have

been handed down to the present time with increased honours and veneration. His works ought never to appear in any language but that in which they were written. So long as his dogmas remain enveloped in mystical symbols, we may suppose them, with the Chinese, to be profoundly wise and divinely true; but when submitted to Mr. Marshman's translation, the charm is at once dispelled, and we find nothing remaining but the mere *caput mortuum* of some stale remark or homely truth.

. If, however, Mr. Marshman has laboured to little purpose as a translator, he has, without expressly intending it, conferred on us a benefit of a higher nature. His work is indeed the best of satires on that foolish or malignant admiration which has so long laboured to persuade the western world, that their literature and religion are but childishness in comparison of the wisdom and illumination of the great Confucius, and that the antiquity of the divine records is but of a late date, when contrasted with the countless ages of the authentic history of China."—*Quarterly Review*, Vol. xi. No. xxii. Art. 5.

For a view of the second half of the *Lun-yu* I must return to the *Scientia Sinensis* of P. Couplet; but having quoted so fully from Dr. Marshman's translation of the first half, I shall not detain the reader long with the remainder of the work. The pages to which I must refer, of the Latin version of the treatise in question, begin again from unity; and so belong to a second volume (although this is not indicated by a second title-page), the sixth book commencing at p. 69.

To show the disbelief of Confucius in the providence of a god or gods, and his disregard of whatever relates to a future state of existence, the following passage may be worth adding to those already given, bearing the same way: "*Ki-lu* quæsit à Magistro suo, quî serviendum sit *spiritibus* [see note after the quotation of l. iv. c. i. § 20]? *Confucius*, tu, inquit, necdum probè nosti servire hominibus, qui ante oculos tuos versantur quotidie; quomodo poteris servire spiritibus à nostro mortalium sensu tam remotis? Ergo liceat mihi saltem (inquit idem discipulus) exquirere abs te de morte. Respondet: necdum probè

nosti vivere, quomodo nosces mori?"—p. 71. A system of morality which is not founded on the basis of any religion, must be peculiarly unimpressive upon the heart and conscience, even in comparison with other Pagan systems; and, accordingly, the learned classes of society in China, which all belong to the sect of Confucius, exhibit a sad picture of human depravity. The following is but too true a description of a Chinese person of education; I extract it from the same article of the periodical above referred to, from which I have quoted the critique upon Dr. Marshman's *Lun-yu*. "Patience, obedience, gravity, and taciturnity are the cardinal points on which the ethics of Confucius turn; and what Confucius was, the thorough-bred Chinese is at this day—a mere automaton, whose every motion is regulated and adjusted with the nicety of a piece of clock-work. The spring and elasticity of mind which, by operating on the animal machine, occasions all the diversity and irregularity that characterize its movements in our western hemisphere, will in vain be sought for in a Chinese. The powers of his mind are tamed down to the same state of inactivity with those of the body. In his public transactions he must suppress every passion, but may, without censure, give them full scope in private. He is always artful, and always heartless; virtuous in appearance, extremely vicious in reality; and at the moment that moral sentences flow from his lips, his heart is most probably intent on the secret commission of some dishonest act." Of lives so spent the most usual termination is, as might naturally be expected, that described by Mr. Gutzlaff in the following terms:—"They [the followers of Confucius] are callous to all which concerns man's supreme happiness, But when death arrives, which cuts off their prospects, they often throw themselves into the arms of a Buddha or Taou priest, whom they had heretofore treated with the utmost contempt."—*Journal of three Voyages, &c.* p. 326.

With regard to the fundamental principle of Confucius,—that in every virtue a mean is to be observed, and that he who exceeds this mean is just as reprehensible as he who falls short of it,—the following may be added to the previous extracts to

the same effect. “*Cu-cum* percontatur de duobus condiscipulis *Su* et *Xam*, uter esset sapientior? *Confucius* respondit: *Su* excedit, *Xam* verò non pertingit. Ambo deerrant à medio. Ait iterum *Cu-cum*; si ita est, ergo *Su* antecellit sapientiâ alterum. *Confucius* ait: proprius sapientiæ locus est medium, quod qui transilit, similis est non attingenti.”—p. 72. To this I subjoin a very full exposition by this sage of the same fallacious principle. “Tu ergo paulisper hîc consiste, inquit *Confucius*, quoad ego exponam tibi.—Qui gaudet amplissimo charitatis sinu complecti omnes, et de nullo non mereri bene; nec gaudet interim discere, quis esse debeat charitatis istius usus ac modus: hominis hujuscemodi vitium, in quod scilicet ipsa virtus degenerabit, erit ruditas, cæcitasque, dum scilicet cæco impetu benevolentiae, ceu vento incitatus, sine judicio vel modo beneficia delaturus sit.—Qui gaudet prudentiâ, seu veri perspicientiâ; nec gaudet interim discere, et indagare atque consulere: hominis hujuscemodi vitium erit perpetua quædam ambiguitas et incertitudo fluctuantis animi.—Qui gaudet fide, seu dictorum conventorumque constantiâ et veritate; nec gaudet interim discere, tempus et modum scilicet: hominis hujuscemodi vitium erit crebra et gravis offensio, cum damno vel suo vel aliorum.—Qui gaudet rectitudine et candore, dolos autem et ambages, et quicquid fictum est ac simulatum, odit; nec gaudet interim discere, quis hîc quoque modus servari debeat: hominis hujuscemodi vitium erunt angustiae coarctati animi et tricæ perquam difficiles, in quas eum nimis candidum et dissimulare nescium, tum simplicitas sua, tum fraus aliena conjiciet.—Qui gaudet generosè ac fortiter quidlibet agere et pati; nec gaudet interim discere, quis virtutis hujus sit usus ac modus: hominis hujuscemodi vitium erit insolentia, reipublicæ perturbatio ac rebellio.—Qui gaudet adamantino quodam robore animi atque constantiâ; nec gaudet interim discere, ubi, quando, quomodo, quantâ cum moderatione sit adhibenda: hominis hujuscemodi vitium erit stultitia et amentia.”—pp. 126–7.

The length of this speech—which is the longest that I have met with, recorded to have been uttered by Confucius, and

which certainly is very copious, or even prolix, in comparison with those he generally made;—shows the importance he attached to the principle of the *constant mean*; which, in fact, was with him, exactly as it was with Aristotle, the very groundwork and foundation of his system. The “middleness that always aims at the middle,”^a which is the definition of virtue in the abstract, given by one of those philosophers, could hardly be rendered more closely than by the *Chung-yung* of the other; for the excessive vagueness of the Chinese language admits of no distinction in the expression of *middle*, *middling*, and *middlingness*. And it may be further observed, that they both defend their favourite principle just in the same way, that is, by special examples; for though Aristotle mostly employs general reasoning, he in this instance resorts to illustration, giving it as his reason, “that in discourses concerning the nature of actions, those upon the abstract subject are too vague, and those which descend to particulars are more just; since actions relate to individual cases.”^b But in the foregoing speech of Confucius, he has, from the desire of fully exemplifying his maxim of the golden mean, actually given us the Eclectic system complete; and thus supplies the omission which, for some purpose or other, he made in the more formal exposé of his doctrine, already quoted from the *Chung-yung*. He there placed the very foundation of all virtue in sincerity or adherence to truth; to which he here assigns the subordinate post of one of the social virtues, in accordance with the doctrine laid down by Cicero; that veracity, as well as a strict observance of promises, was an essential part of Justice.^c Here, on the other hand, he

^a Μεσότης τις ἄρα ἐστὶν ἡ ἀρετὴ, στοχαστική γε οὖσα τοῦ μέσου.—*Ethic.* lib. ii. cap. 6.

^b ἐν γὰρ τοῖς περὶ τὰς πράξεις λόγοις, οἱ μὲν καθόλου κενότεροί εἰσιν, οἱ δ' ἐπὶ μέρους ἀληθινώτεροι· περὶ γὰρ τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα αἱ πράξεις.—*Ethic.* lib. ii. cap. 7.

^c Fundamentum est autem justitiæ fides; id est, *dictorum, conventorumque* constantia et veritas.—*De Officiis*, lib. i. cap. 7.

raises to the foremost rank Aristotle's principle of Mediocrity, or that of Moderation, technically denominated *Temperantia* by Cicero; which, we have seen, was, in like manner, placed at the head of the list of virtues by the Eclectic sages in the time of Ammianus Marcellinus. His classification of the remaining virtues is here more subdivided than before; but still there can be recognized in it the elements—*disjuncti membra*—of the disjointed Eclectic system. We have here the three remaining virtues of that system, not only the same, but also in the same order, with the sole exception of Charity (on account of the importance attached to it), being unsystematically separated from the rest of the social virtues, and made a class by itself. But after this class comes the three following ones:—1°. *Prudence*, misrepresented in its general nature, just in the same way as it was by Plato; 2°. two virtues that are made essential parts of *Justice* by Cicero, as above pointed out; 3°. two kinds of *Fortitude*, distinguished by Aristotle.^a

Let us now, for a moment, look to the manner in which the last named philosopher sustained his strange position, that middlingness or mediocrity was the very essence of virtue. I have already observed that, for this purpose, he chiefly relied on exemplification; but his first and most prominent example is the virtue of courage, which he places in the middle between cowardice on the side of defect, and rashness, or a reprehensible degree of intrepidity, on the side of excess. He here acutely distinguishes between the firmness of mind of the person who sees the full extent of danger to be encountered, but yet is not thereby deterred from pursuing his object, and the insensibility to danger which arises more from the constitution of the body than from mental strength. But what right had he to assume

^a Aristotle, in his account of Manliness or Courage (*ἀνδρεία*), distinguishes between *θρασύτης* and *ἀφοβία*. The former quality, I submit, corresponds with the expression of Confucius, which P. Couplet has translated *Insolentia*; and the latter with that which he has rendered *adamantino quodam robore animi atque constantia*.

that an extreme exertion of courage must be either rashness or culpable intrepidity? If, indeed, the motive leading to such an act be a wrong, or even a trifling one, I agree with him in his disapprobation of what has been so done, and do not object to any term of reproach he may have attached to it. But suppose the motive be good, and the occasion call for extraordinary energy, then the courage displayed by the agent does not at all degenerate, or forfeit its character of fortitude, by becoming extreme; on the contrary, it is not only courage still, but a higher order of courage, and is admired and respected as such by all mankind. The same reasoning, it is obvious, will apply to every other sort of virtue, except those which are ranked by moralists under the general head of Temperance; but the ingenious Stagirite, finding his principle to bear upon one very important class of virtues, attempted from love of system to extend it to all, and thus allowed the great acuteness of his powerful mind to be blunted and perverted, by too strong a predilection for generalization. No similar ground, however, can be assigned for the adoption of the same unnatural error by Confucius, as—whether from some confusion of intellect, or from whatever other cause it may have arisen—he was peculiarly unsystematic; frequently jumbling the parts of the theory he adopted, and, on at least one formal occasion, omitting its most important part. That the error in question is a most unnatural one, and, therefore, most unlikely to have been fallen into by two parties independently of each other, can be proved even upon Aristotle's own showing. For he admits that, “of those who are blameable for excess, he that is so for extreme intrepidity, is without a name; and that many vices arising out of virtues exerted to an extreme degree, are nameless.”^a But if he had not been blinded by zeal for the extension of his favourite maxim to every case, he might easily have found a name in use for extreme intrepidity, which still would not divest it of the

^a τῶν δ' ὑπερβαλλόντων, ὁ μὲν τῇ ἀφοβίᾳ, ἀνώνυμος· πολλὰ δ' εἰσὶν ἀνώνυμα.—*Ethic.* lib. ii. cap. 7.

character of courage; I mean *heroism*. He was, however, quite right in admitting, that there is no name for excessive intrepidity, exerted in a good cause, which would imply that it was censurable; as well as in his statement, that there are no depreciating terms for several other virtues carried to extremes. But, surely, he could not have adduced a stronger proof that the common sense of mankind was against him on this point; for if they agreed with him in thinking that every kind of virtue exerted beyond the bounds of mediocrity was blameable, they certainly would not have failed to invent words to express so important a distinction. And this criterion is the more decisive, when it is taken into consideration that he actually coined, and attempted to introduce names for some of the vices that were the imaginary offspring of his system, but that, notwithstanding the weight and influence of his talents, those names never came into general use.

But the leading error of the Aristotelian system of ethics is opposed, not only to the common sense of mankind at large, but also, in a peculiar manner, to the genius of the Chinese people. That their learning, their charity, their veracity, their courage, are, in practice, of a very *mediocre* description, I am quite ready to admit; but that it should occur to any one of a nation of boasters to compose of himself a scheme in which *moderation* was professed and upheld in theory, is utterly improbable. The Chung-yung, then, or “golden mean” of Confucius, would even alone,—considered absolutely in its own bearing, as also in reference both to the natural views of mankind in general, and to the character of the Chinese mind in particular,—be very nearly sufficient to establish the foreign origin of this sage’s code of morals. But when this proof is joined to the one previously given, whose deficiencies, if any there be, it fully supplies, their combined force is, I submit, wholly irresistible.

In reference to the remarkable passage last quoted, I have to add but one more observation. It has been already pointed out, that the Eclectic system laboured under great inconsistencies, from the ineffectual attempts, made by its supporters, to

reconcile the tenets of Plato and Aristotle with each other, and with the moral precepts stolen from Christianity. Now one of the most prominent of those inconsistencies may, I apprehend, be traced in the quotation before us; in which the charitable man is at first described as acting in the most benevolent manner towards all with whom he has to deal. How the *objects* of benevolence were, notwithstanding, limited by our philosopher, and to what a very narrow circle he reduced their universality, has been shown in the examination of two other passages. But here we have a restriction placed also upon the *degree* in which this virtue is allowed to be exerted in the service of mankind; just after the use of words which seem to imply that it should be quite unbounded. Of the reality of the former part of the contradiction there cannot be a doubt; and the limitation which gave birth to it, must be ascribed to the sage's own narrowness of mind; as he had heard of a more liberal interpretation of the Christian rules of charity, and one more consonant to the terms in which he himself has delivered it, but unequivocally declared his disapprobation of this extension of the precept. The latter part is collected from more vague expressions; but as far as it holds, it may be looked upon as a result of the vain efforts that were used to make the Aristotelian ethics harmonize with Christian doctrines.

I shall conclude my extracts from the *Lun-yu* with the two which follow. "Fortè quispiam dixit: beneficiis compensare odia et injurias, de hoc quid videtur tibi? *Confucius* respondit: qui sic agat; ecquâ re tandem compensabit benefacta? Dispar enim debet esse merces ac ratio ejus, qui benè meretur, et illius qui malè."—pp. 105–6. "Possumus odisse sine iracundiâ, vel alterum quemcumque naturæ motum sentire, et tamen citra vitium sequi."—p. 127. Here there is evidently a reference to a distinguishing precept of him who spake as no merely human instructor, from his own independent conception of the subject, ever expressed himself: "love your enemies, do good to them which hate you." But so far was our philosopher from being capable of originating this rule, that, even after hearing it, he

was unable to perceive or appreciate its beauty and its excellence ; and he not only argues against the principle of returning good for evil, but he also positively sanctions the feeling of hatred. If this feeling be restrained within the bounds of the "golden mean," it may be indulged in, it seems, with innocence. And where are the limits of moderation in this instance placed ? Just at the point where external decorum ceases to be observed. As soon as animosity shows itself in ebullitions of anger, it becomes a vice ; but as long as it is concealed under the disguise of a calm and smiling countenance, it may be as bitter and as keen as you please, without deserving any censure.^a So much for the boasted ethics of the Chinese moralist.

Although the *Scientia Sinensis Latine Exposita* was written under the influence of strong prejudice, with the intention of supporting a very extravagant estimate of the value of Chinese erudition, yet this work, as has been already pointed out, is in the main executed with fairness, so that a judicious reader can derive from the translation, considered apart from the commentary, a tolerably just view of the original compositions ; its publication, therefore, must have produced a very different effect from that for which it was designed, and have greatly tended to remove the erroneous impressions that had been created, by the loose and scattered statements, relative to the subject, which had previously made their way to Europe. But however useful the book was in this respect, yet, from being in itself (as every correct picture of Chinese literary treatises necessarily must be) exceedingly dull and uninteresting, as well as from the circumstance of the language in which it is written having gone very

^a How diametrically opposite the Christian precept relative to this matter ! The inspired Apostle of the Gentiles, with a considerate allowance for human infirmity, forbids not the first emotion of anger,—an emotion which we are unable in some instances to prevent, and which none but the hypocrite could in such instances conceal ;—but condemns the subsequent cherishing of this feeling, and the allowing it to settle down into fixed deliberate hatred. "Be ye angry, and sin not, let not the sun go down upon your wrath."—Ephes. iv. 26.

much out of general use, it was after some interval laid upon the shelf, and appears to have been nearly quite forgotten; in consequence of which, the delusion it had served to dispel was revived, and the praises of Chinese learning have been since renewed with more extravagance than ever. Still the evil has brought, as before, its correction with it; and the natural good sense of the public cannot be much longer kept blindfolded by vague general assertions, the fallacy of which a careful examination of particulars is sufficient to detect; while fresh translations of Chinese works which from time to time issue from the press, are continually facilitating the means, and increasing the opportunities, of making such examination. These translations are more likely to hold their ground in public favour than the older ones, as they, in general, give part, at least, of their originals, and thereby afford aid towards learning the Chinese language and writing;—an object of great interest not only to the merchant and the missionary, but also to the philologist and metaphysician. Of all those works, however, whether later or earlier published, the chief value, to the generality of readers, lies in their serving to show the real state of literature in China; and the more close and exact representations they exhibit of their originals, the more strikingly will they be found to sustain and verify the description which has just been given of the extreme worthlessness of that literature. Several, indeed, of the publications in question have been referred to in the foregoing pages; and it is only from a wish to avoid increasing too much the size of this volume, that extracts more ample, and taken from a greater number of them, have not been adduced. I shall here merely add, that their bearing is to be judged of by their immediate contents, rather than by the opinions of those who have prepared them for our inspection; for the proficients in this line of study appear, in general, to have greatly over-rated the intrinsic value of the productions which they have gone to the trouble of translating.

Now the Chinese, like the Egyptians of old, have had abundance of time for the cultivation of every branch of learning;

and like those Egyptians too, they are distinguished for their natural shrewdness and industry, in which qualities they far excel the surrounding nations. Of the Egyptian people it is known, through the drawings of Rosellini and others, that they made considerable advances in several of the mechanical arts; while the progress of the Chinese in the same line of invention, and in every kind of expertness that is attainable through tentative methods without the aid of written treatises, is matter of complete notoriety. Moreover, of the former people it has been proved, that, although they boasted greatly of their proficiency in literature and science, they were in fact grossly deficient in both; and their ignorance has, in particular, been shown, in the department of history, from the evidence drawn from one remarkable individual of their nation, and, in the department of astronomy, from that supplied by another. Against the latter people,—equally distinguished for their boasting,—the very same deficiencies in point of learning have been established, through an accumulation of evidence that can hardly be resisted, and with a strength of proof that is seldom attainable in cases which do not admit of strict demonstration. Surely a parallel which holds in so many respects between two nations widely distant from each other, and between which there is no reason to suppose there was formerly any intercourse, is very striking; and forcibly points out the disadvantages attending the use of ideographic writing; for no other identity of cause can be assigned for this identity of effects. But even where the parallel ceases, the combined view of the two cases still continues to strengthen the proof of the immense superiority of alphabets over graphic systems of human invention. For as soon as a part of the Egyptian people adopted the Greek mode of writing, not as subsidiary to their national system, but as their sole method, they almost immediately rose to preeminence in every department of learning; and, in particular, the astronomy of the Alexandrian School held undisputed sway over the minds of the learned for above fourteen hundred years. On the side of the Chinese, indeed, this criterion of the superiority of alphabets

cannot be brought to bear ; but then a more intimate knowledge of the nature of their system is attainable than of that of the Egyptians ; and the further this knowledge is pursued, the more clearly and decisively does it lead us to precisely the same general result.

There is one more view of this subject which, I conceive, ought not here to be altogether passed over ; although my limits will not allow me to attempt more than a very slight and imperfect allusion to it. Confucius has, on account of certain moral precepts found scattered through his works and those of his immediate disciples, been very generally ranked by his admirers above all the sages of antiquity who were not illuminated by the light of revelation. But it now appears that he has not the remotest title to the credit of having originated the precepts in question ;—precepts of the true spirit of which he was wholly ignorant, and which were grossly perverted in passing through his hands ;—and, consequently, it is obvious that, in order fairly to compare him with the Pagan philosophers who lived before the introduction of Christianity into the world, he should first be stripped of his borrowed ornaments. If then the truisms, the silly sayings, the shallow reasonings, that have been quoted from him in this chapter,—and which afford, I will venture to affirm, a correct sample of all the ingredients of his moral teaching that can be justly considered as his own,—be contrasted with the wonderful reach of thought displayed by Socrates, in various instances recorded by Xenophon and Plato,—with the sublime, though fanciful, effusions of the latter author,—with the acute disquisitions of Aristotle,—with the rich and polished descriptions of Cicero,—how vastly will the Chinese sage be found to sink below par in this comparison ! I admit that what the European philosophers taught, had little influence upon the lives of men, and that their several systems were generally considered as merely speculative theories. I admit further, that there was much of error and absurdity mixed with truth in their doctrines, particularly in the department of theology ; and that where they were right, they were still in

great uncertainty, even upon the most important points. But with all these abatements from the value of their discoveries and the extent of their attainments, how immeasurably high above the Chinese legislator do they stand, in the scale of intellect;—in ingenuity, in acuteness, in clearness of conception, in sublimity of imagination, in profoundness of thought, in strength of reasoning! Surely, when the prodigious superiority of the Europeans, in these respects, is taken into consideration, it must convince the impartial reader, that alphabetic writing has exerted a far greater influence than it is generally supposed to have done, in improving the powers of the mind, and enlarging the stock of human knowledge. Surely when he reflects on the preeminent value of this gift, even in a worldly point of view,—and independently of the recollection of its principal use, and that for which it was first granted; namely, to preserve to us the truths of religion, secure from the corruption of oral, or, what would be nearly as bad, ideagraphic tradition;—he must feel a new motive for raising his thoughts in gratitude to that gracious Being, who is, indeed, the author and giver of all the good we enjoy, but seems to show himself more conspicuously our benefactor, in those blessings which he has deigned to confer on us through supernatural means.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE HISTORICAL SYSTEM OF THE CHINESE, AND THEIR CLAIMS
TO THE CREDIT OF CERTAIN INVENTIONS, EXAMINED
BY THE AID OF EXTERNAL TESTS.

LIMIT TO THE RANGE OF TRUE CHINESE HISTORY AND CHRONOLOGY—

HISTORY OF THE GREAT WALL, A RICH SPECIMEN OF CHINESE
IMPOSTURE—MATERIALS AND STRUCTURE OF WALL AT VARIANCE
WITH ITS REPUTED AGE—WALL MENTIONED BY NO EASTERN
AUTHOR WHO PRECEDED MIRKHOND—WALL NOT MENTIONED IN
ANY EARLY EUROPEAN ACCOUNT OF CHINA—NO ANCIENT USE
IN CHINA, OF GUNPOWDER AND FIREARMS—OR OF THE MARI-
NER'S COMPASS—OR OF PRINTING—INVESTIGATION OF THE TIME
WHEN CONFUCIUS LIVED—WHEN CHINESE HISTORY RECEIVED ITS
PRESENT FORM.

THE oldest part of Chinese history that treats of events of which accounts have been transmitted to us through other channels also, is that which relates to the taking of Pe-kin, and the subjugation of the northern portion of the Celestial Empire, by the armies of Jenghiz-khan, in the beginning of the thirteenth century. This sanguinary warrior having extended his conquests from the most eastern regions of the Asiatic continent to Persia, and the Tartar hordes that were trained by him having, under his immediate successors, carried their victorious arms still farther westward, so as seriously to alarm the potentates of Europe, it is no wonder that the achievements of a life so important, in itself and in its consequences, should have been recorded not long after their occurrence by writers of various nations and opposite sentiments; and there are in profane history but few remote facts much better attested, than those in which all the authors in question agree. But if we compare to

the standard thus produced, the corresponding portion of the Chinese annals, as exhibited in the translation of P. de Mailla, it will be found, with regard to the two above-mentioned events, very tolerably to bear this test, in the general outline of the dates and circumstances it presents to us, though not in its subordinate details. From that epoch onward the Chinese have had the history of their country written in the Tartar language, as well as in their own ideagrams; and as, thenceforward, the mandarins, and, if so long in existence, the Board of History, had augmented means of preserving the memory of transactions, so they do not appear to have tampered, to any great extent, with those of leading notoriety and importance. But in their mode of dealing with matters relative to which misrepresentation was less liable to exposure, they, as will presently be shown by a striking example, indulged in considerable liberties, even within the limit of time just specified; while beyond it there has been no external check whatever on their propensity to fiction.^a They might, indeed, have transmitted a true picture of events for probably about three centuries before the Mogul invasion; as, there is reason to think, they were acquainted with the use of Hindu writing for the greater portion of that length of time: and they might, perhaps, have had some very vague notions of history, extending a century still earlier, by means of oral and ideagraphic tradition. But how can we depend on their adherence to truth, for those dark periods in which their deviations from it cannot be detected by the aid of any external light, when they have been found venturing upon misstatements for times far less favourable to imposition? As to the occurrences in China which preceded the ninth century, they are now utterly unknown, and the Chinese have not had the power to preserve any true memorial of them, even if they

^a The Tartar records could not have furnished any external check to this propensity, as the Moguls soon became identified in interests and prejudices with their Chinese subjects: and, besides, they had the benefit of alphabetic writing but a very short time before their invasion of China, as will be presently seen.

had the wish to have done so. All that relates to their history before that era, is one uninterrupted expanse of darkness, without a single bright spot in it, except that which is illuminated by the alphabetic part of the Sino-Syriac inscription.

It is within the interval between total darkness and the dawn of historic light in China, or between the ninth and thirteenth centuries, that, as I conceive, the writings of Confucius were produced; but, as to the eclipses mentioned in one of them, which, it has been already shown, are mere interpolations to accommodate this work to an altered range of dates, their insertion must be referred to a much later period, the probable limits of which shall presently be considered.

As soon as the Chinese Annals admit of partial verification by comparison with foreign authorities, the imperfection of the graphic system employed in writing them begins also to appear. The account given in the original Chinese document of Jenghiz-khan and the dynasty of his descendants, is so defective, that P. de Mailla, in order to supply its omissions and clear up its obscurities, was obliged, in forming his translation, to have recourse to the Tartar histories of the same imperial race. This is admitted by his editor M. Des Hautesrayes, in the following passage:—"Le P. de Mailla avoit promis dans sa préface de s'en tenir au *Tong-kien-kang-mou*, mais lorsqu'il fut arrivé à l'époque des *Leao*, des *Kin*, et des *Yuen* ou *Mongous*, remarquant que ces annales ne s'étendoient point assez sur ces familles étrangères, il sentit la nécessité d'avoir recours à d'autres sources. L'empereur Chun-chi, père de Kang-hi, fit traduire en Tartare l'histoire de ces trois monarchies, par Tcharbouhaï, Nantou, Hokiton, Lieou-hong-yu, et plusieurs autres lettrés habiles, que ce prince avoit associés au tribunal des historiens. Comme cette histoire, rédigée avec le plus grand soin d'après des monumens et des mémoires authentiques de l'empire, est d'une autorité égale à celle du *Tong-kien-kang-mou*, le savant missionnaire la traduisit en entier et l'ajouta par parties à ces annales, en rangeant les évènements à leur époque. Ainsi, sans discontinuer l'ouvrage qu'il s'étoit proposé de traduire uniquement, il trouva

le moyen de jeter beaucoup de lumières *sur quantité de faits qui seroient demeurés obscurs, ou même entièrement inconnus*, sans cette utile précaution.”—*Hist. Gen. de la Chine*, tom. ix. note à p. 1.

The Moguls^a became acquainted with alphabetic writing only a very few years before their invasion of China. Jenghiz-khan learned the art from a Yugure Tartar, secretary to Tayan-khan, after he had slain in battle this chieftain of a neighbouring clan, and had got possession of his territories. The occasion and manner of the introduction of the use of the Yugure letters among the Moguls are related in the historic work of P. de Mailla, as follows:—“Un homme du royaume de *Oueour* appelé *Tatatong-ou*,^b pour lequel *Tayang-han* avoit beaucoup d’estime et qu’il honoroit comme son maître, voyant ce prince mort et la bataille perdue, serra dans son sein le sceau d’or qu’il lui avoit confié, et chercha à se sauver. Un Mongou le prit et l’amena à *Témoutchin* [the original name of Jenghiz-khan], qui lui dit: ‘Tous les peuples qui obéissoient à *Tayang-han* sont maintenant mes sujets. Pourquoi fuyez-vous avec ce sceau, et que prétendez-vous faire?’—‘Ce sceau,’ lui répondit *Tatatong-ou*, ‘m’a été confié par mon maître, et je voulois le remettre à celui de sa famille qui doit lui succéder.’ *Témoutchin* le loua de son zèle et de sa fidélité; ensuite, considérant ce sceau, il lui demanda quel en étoit l’usage. *Tatatong-ou* le lui ayant expliqué, ce prince, satisfait, lui rendit ce sceau pour qu’il s’en servît auprès de lui, comme il faisoit auprès de *Tayang-han*. Il lui demanda ensuite s’il connoissoit les lettres et les coutumes du royaume de *Oueour* dont il tiroit son origine: *Tatatong-ou* lui parla en détail des loix et des coutumes des *Oueour*; et *Témoutchin* lui ordonna d’en instruire ses frères et ses fils, et

^a This name is written by some authors, perhaps with more correctness, *Mongol*; but *Mogul* is the form in which the word usually appears in English.

^b M. Des Hautesrayes has subjoined, respecting this person, the following note:—“Il étoit du royaume des *Igours*, que les Chinois écrivent *Oueour*. Il donna aux Mongous l’alphabet des *Igours*, qui eux-mêmes l’avoient reçu, selon toutes les apparences, des Syriens Nestoriens. *Editeur*.”

de leur enseigner en même-temps la langue et les lettres de ce pays.”—*Hist. Gen. de la Chine*, tom. ix. p. 39. This system of letters, which appears to have been derived from the Syriac alphabet,^a continued in use among the Moguls till the reign of Kublaï-khan, the first prince of this race whose dominion extended over the whole of China, and reckoned by the Chinese the first emperor of the Mogul dynasty; who assigned the following reason for compelling his Tartar subjects to change their writing, in the edict which he is represented to have issued on the occasion:—“Le degré de puissance où la nation des Mongous et son gouvernement sont arrivés, exige qu’elle ait des lettres assorties au génie de sa langue.”—*Ibidem*, p. 311. The strange opinion implied in this extract—that it is inconsistent with the dignity of a powerful nation to make use of the letters of a foreign country—is worth noticing; as, most likely, it is to the prevalence of the same erroneous impression throughout the East, that we have to attribute the prodigious number and variety of alphabets which have sprung up in that quarter of the world;—an evil which must greatly impede the mutual intercourse of eastern nations, and retard the progress of oriental learning. The system introduced by Kublaï-khan is stated to contain a thousand characters, while that employed under the auspices of the present Tartar dynasty in China, as M. Des Hautesrayes, in a note upon this part of the text, informs us, exhibits no less than thirteen hundred and forty-seven. Hence some notion may be formed of the excessive clumsiness and im-

^a Upon this point, the following extract from M. Petis de la Croix’s History of Jenghiz-khan, as translated into English in 1722, has some bearing:—“The religion of the *Yugures* has not been perfectly known to historians: some have writ that they were Idolaters; others, that they were Christians, but Nestorians; and others, that they were Mahometans; because several amongst them made profession of all these religions.”—p. 95. The Nestorians reached the eastern extremity of Asia long before the Mohammedans, or any other people making use of alphabetic writing; and, therefore, most probably, the alphabet of the *Yugures*, as well as those first employed by the more leading Tartar tribes, was framed after the model of the Syriac system.

perfection of those syllabaries; and they, so far, serve to afford a tolerably striking exemplification of the deteriorating effects of ideographic practice upon alphabetic writing.

In the Chinese account of the campaigns of Jenghiz-khan which preceded the siege of Pe-kin, the assertion is, upon one occasion, hazarded, that, after a certain victory, he was prevented from entering China by means of the *great wall*:—"Tchinkis-han, profitant de sa victoire, s'avança jusqu'à Kou-pé-keou,^a mais il se trouva arrêté par les Kin, qui avoient repris la forteresse de Kiu-yong-koan; les Mongous ne purent passer la grande muraille pour entrer dans la Chine."—*Hist. Gen. de la Chine*, tom. ix. p. 54. Now, if it be made out, as, I think, it can with a high degree of probability, that the great wall of China was not built till long after the age of Jenghiz-khan, the extract before us will afford an instance of the Chinese annalists venturing upon fiction, even within the range of their true history. But having assigned to the construction of this wall a very remote period upon which no light from an extrinsic source could be brought to bear, they were obliged to follow up the one misstatement by others, which, relating to more recent times, are less secure from the risk of detection. The fallacious nature, however, of even the first of those misstatements may be exposed pretty clearly, by the internal evidence of the inconsistencies which, upon examination, it will be found to betray. The stupendous work in question is alleged to have been executed at precisely a date (for the mandarins are never at a loss at fixing the exact time of a remote event) which corresponds with the year B. C. 244; and the occasion of the undertaking, together with the circumstances of its execution, are thus related in the Annals:

"Dans le dessein que *Tsin-chi-hoang-ti* avoit de soumettre

^a M. Des Hautesrayes, in a note upon this passage, gives the following description of the place in question:—"Forteresse de la grande muraille vers la pointe la plus septentrionale du Pé-tché-li, latit. 40 degrés, 43 minutes, 15 secondes, longit, 43 minutes est. *Editeur*."

tous les princes de l'empire, il craignit que les Tartares Hiong-nou (les Huns) ne vinssent le troubler pendant qu'il seroit occupé à ses conquêtes : il voulut se précautionner contre leurs courses ; ses prédécesseurs les avoient écartes de leurs frontières, mais il étoit à craindre qu'ils ne s'en approchassent de nouveau. Ces Tartares n'avoient point de demeures fixes, et ils ne vouloient point se renfermer dans des murailles ; des tentes leur servoient de maisons, et ils campoient dans les endroits propres à la nourriture de leurs troupeaux, qu'ils conduisoient par-tout avec eux, et qui leur fournissoient de quoi vivre. Le butin qu'ils faisoient dans leurs brigandages, les pourvoyoit des autres choses nécessaires.

“ Alors l'empire étoit partagé entre sept princes, les Tsin, les Tchou, les Yen, les Tchao, les Ouei, les Han, et les Tsi. Trois de ces principautés, savoir, celles de Tsin, de Yen, et de Tchao, confinoient avec les Tartares. Tsin-chi-hoang-ti, pour ne pas être continuellement obligé de tenir sur ses frontières des troupes qu'il pourroit employer plus utilement ailleurs, et afin d'arrêter leurs courses, fit firmer les passages de Long-si, de Pé-ti et de Chang-kiun, par où ces Tartares pouvoient pénétrer dans la Chine. Les princes de Tchao et de Yen, à son exemple, firent construire des murailles ; le premier depuis Tai, au pied des montagnes Yu-chan, jusqu'à Kao-kiué, pour mettre à couvert Yun-tchong, Yen-men, et Tai-kiun ; et le prince de Yen en fit construire une depuis Tsao-yang, jusqu'à Siang-ping, pour garantir Chang-kou, Yu-yang, You-pe-ping, et Leao-tong-kiun, qui est une partie du Leao-tong.^a

^a To this part of the text M. Des Hautesrayes has annexed the following note :—“ Les Chinois donnent à cette grande muraille, qui borne la Chine du côté de la Tartarie, le nom de *Ouan-li-chang-tching*, cest-à-dire, *la grande muraille de dix mille ly*. A compter dix *ly* pour une lieue, elle auroit milles lieues d'étendue, mais c'est une exagération : en estimant les divers contours qu'on lui a fait prendre dans quelques endroits, elle n'a qu'aux environs de cinq cens lieues. Elle a de hauteur vingt à vingt-cinq pieds, et elle est si large qu'en quelques endroits six chevaux de front pourroient courir dessus sans s'incommoder. Elle continue jusque sur des montagnes inaccessibles. Le P.

“ Cette muraille achevée, Tsin-chi-hoang-ti enleva douze places au prince de Han, et la campagne suivant [in the year B. C. 243], le pays de Tchang-yeou-koué, au prince de Ouei. Il rappella ensuite ses troupes, parce qu’une maladie contagieuse, répandue dans ses états, lui emportoit chaque jour beaucoup de monde. Cette espèce de peste ayant cessé, il recommença la guerre [in the year B. C. 242] contre le prince de Ouei, à qui il prit encore vingt villes.

“ Le prince de Tchou, voyant que Tsin-chi-hoang-ti dépouilloit insensiblement les autres princes, commença à craindre pour lui-même ; et sans qu’il fût nécessaire de le solliciter, comme autrefois, il fut le premier à presser vivement les princes de Tchao, de Ouei, et de Han, à joindre leurs troupes aux siennes contre l’ennemi commun : ces princes se liguèrent avec lui pour s’opposer à une puissance si redoutable.”—*Hist. Gen. de la Chine*, tom. ii. pp. 372–4.

The course of the wall is here described, from its western to its eastern extremity, by names which, it is pretended, the places it goes along, had above two thousand years ago. But the Editor has subjoined in notes the modern denominations of the same places ; by inspection of which in the copy of P. de Mailla’s map of China inserted in the first volume of his translation of the Chinese Annals, it will be found, that the western part of this course is given quite inaccurately. Thus the first three of the notes in question are, “ Ti-tao-hien de Ling-tao-fou de Chen-si,”—“ King-yang de la même province,”—“ Joui-te-

Verbiest, en un endroit, lui reconnut mille trente-sept pas géométriques d’élevation au-dessus de l’horizon. Dans sa longueur elle est défendue, à de justes distances, par une chaîne de forts, dans lesquels on entretenoit, apparemment dans des temps où on craignoit des irruptions de la part des Tartares, jusqu’à un million d’hommes. Ceux qui l’ont vue, prétendent qu’il n’y a point d’ouvrage au monde qui lui soit comparable. Aujourd’hui que les Tartares Manchoux sont maîtres de la Chine, nécessairement on néglige d’y faire des réparations ; on entretient seulement les fortifications des passages les plus foibles, le reste tombe en ruine. On voit par l’histoire, qu’on a tort d’attribuer tout ce grand ouvrage à l’empereur Tsin-chi-hoang-ti. *Editeur.*”

tcheou de Yen-ngan-fou du Chen-si ;” which are applied to the explanation, respectively, of the sites called, in the text, Long-si, Pé-ti, and Tai. But the towns, Ling-tao and Yen-ngan, in the province of Chen-si (which have the termination *fou* added to their names only on account of their being of the first rank), appear in the above-mentioned map, at least one degree of latitude to the south of the wall ; and King-yang, in Chen-si, is placed above two degrees distant from it in the same map, that is, more than a hundred and twenty geographical miles to the south of it, in a bird’s-eye line. This instance, by the way, serves to show how grossly ignorant the mandarins were of the geography of their country, before the trigonometrical survey of it was taken for them by foreigners ;—an instance which they, no doubt, would have afterwards removed from their Annals, if they had perceived it in time ; and it is evident, from what occurred upon the disinterment of the Sino-Syriac monument, that their friends the Jesuits would not have betrayed the secret of the correction. But, the fact is, their affecting to tell the ancient names of places, threw such an obscurity over this passage, that they failed to observe its extreme inaccuracy, even after the means of doing so had been placed within their reach ; and it is the combined evidence of two of their most ardent eulogizers, which supplies the means of exposing the extreme deficiency of their information, at a period not very remote, in the subject referred to. I should add that, in Arrowsmith’s map of China, published in London in the year 1835, while two of the cities just specified are placed as far from the wall as they are in P. de Mailla’s chart, the third, namely Kin-yang, is not quite so far ; but still it is therein represented as distant from this barrier, by a portion of two degrees in latitude which scarcely falls short of a hundred geographical miles, and which, by the circuitous route of the Chinese roads, must be considerably more.

But, to proceed to the consideration of the point for which the foregoing extract is principally adduced ;—the narrative there presented to us, affords, I submit, the most decisive evi-

dence of falsehood in all its details, but particularly in those given to explain, when, by whom, and in what length of time, the wall was erected. In the first place, then, this work, of immense labour, is stated to have been undertaken at a period when the empire was distracted with internal divisions, and ruled by seven conflicting parties, the emperor and six kings, all independent of each other. In the second place, Che-whang-te was not the first emperor of his race, but the fourth, and claimed the imperial throne by right of inheritance; he, consequently, looked upon the other six princes as rebels, and there must of necessity have existed deadly enmity between them. In this posture of affairs, it is plain, that the weaker parties would rather have admitted, than excluded, a foreign enemy; and would have impeded, as much as they possibly could, a work which, they must have seen, was undertaken by their principal foe, for the very purpose of gaining more leisure to attack them. Yet, not only are they described as not offering the slightest interruption to this work, but two of them are even stated to have actually cooperated in the completion of it in the most cordial and amicable manner. In the third place, this barrier which, considering the magnitude of the undertaking, and the deficiency of Chinese skill, must have required several years to erect, even though its construction had been carried on with the aid of all the resources of China unobstructed by any hostilities from within or without, is yet represented, under the above circumstances, so adverse to the execution of the work, to have been, by the efforts of only three provinces, or about a fifth part of the empire, completed in less than a single year;—indeed, in so much less time, that during the remainder of the very same year, the emperor conducted, against one of the rebel princes, a campaign which lasted long enough to admit of his taking twelve fortified places. It is unnecessary to dwell more on the absurdities and inconsistencies that meet us at every step of our way through this incongruous tale; which is proved utterly untrue by its own evidence, as clearly as ever a story was refuted by such means.

But evidence supplied from other sources will carry us much farther, and tends to show, not only that the wall is not two thousand years old, but also that it has not yet reached even the quarter of that age. This evidence is of two kinds,—positive, as derived from the nature and circumstances of the work itself; and negative, as deduced from the earliest foreign accounts of China, in none of which—at least not in any of those in which, upon the prevailing supposition, we might most naturally expect to find it—is there any mention of the wall; the first allusion to it by foreigners that is free from all suspicion of interpolation, occurring in the writings of an author of the sixteenth century.

In the first place, the materials and construction of the wall tell very decidedly against the age claimed for it;—as, I think, will be rendered evident by the following extracts from Captain Parish's description of it, published in Sir George Staunton's *Account of Lord Macartney's Embassy to China*.

“The body of the great wall is an elevation of earth, retained on each side by a wall of masonry, and terraced by a platform of square bricks. The retaining walls, continued above its platform, form its parapets. Its dimensions, independently of fractional parts, are as follow: height of the brick-work to the bottom of the cordon, 20 feet; from the bottom of the cordon to the top of the parapet, 5 feet. The brick wall is placed upon a basis of stone projecting about two feet beyond the brick-work, and of which the height is irregular, owing to the irregularity of the ground over which it runs; but not more than two courses appear above the sod, amounting to somewhat above two feet. Thickness of each parapet wall, at top, 1 foot 6 inches; at the cordon, 2 feet 3 inches; thickness of each retaining wall, where it rests upon the stone base, 5 feet. The bottom of the cordon is upon a level with the terrepleine of the wall. Entire thickness of the wall, including the elevation of earth (which is 11 feet thick in every part of it), at the cordon, 15 feet 6 inches; at the bottom of the brick-work, 21 feet.”—*Authentic Account of Embassy to China, &c.* vol. ii. pp. 189–91.

“ The bottom of the loopholes is on a level with the terre-pleine of the wall ; and from thence they are sloped downwards, so as to discover an enemy within a few yards of the basis of the wall. *It will perhaps be thought that this position is much better calculated for the use of firearms, than that of bows and arrows.* The towers incorporated with the great wall are distant from each other about one hundred yards ;—” pp. 191–2.

“ The coins of the doors, windows, ports, embrasures, and many of the salient angles and staircases in the towers, as well as the broad bases or stone foundations of the towers and intervening wall, are of a strong grey granite, with a little mixture of mica in it. The rest of those buildings consist of bricks of a bluish colour. *They are laid in laminee of a brick thick each ; forming, as it were, so many distinct walls as there are bricks in thickness.* They differ in their dimensions, according to the situations in which they are placed. Those in front of the wall and towers are, as follow : thickness of the bricks $3\frac{3}{4}$ inches ; width of the same $7\frac{1}{2}$ inches ; length, 1 foot 3 inches. Those for the terraces of the wall and towers differ only from the former in being perfectly square, each side containing 15 inches. *The blue colour of the bricks led to doubt, whether they had been exposed to any greater than the sun’s common heat,* though they had so long resisted the influence of time and weather. It has been ascertained by experiment, that a mass of clay or brick contracts in its dimensions when exposed to the action of fire ; and that this contraction is increased in proportion as the heat augments ; but that the mass does not return to its former dimensions after being withdrawn from the fire. Had the bricks, used for the great wall, been baked only in the sun, they would contract when exposed to a wood fire or red heat ; but which, on trial, turned out not to be the case. Indeed some of the kilns still subsist near the great wall, where probably the bricks of which it is composed, were burned. The great wall does not appear to have been intended as a defence against cannon ; since the parapets are insufficient to resist the force of cannon shot. But the soles of the embrasures of the towers were

observed to have been pierced with small holes, similar to those used in Europe for the reception of the swivels of wall-pieces. *The holes appear to be a part of the original construction of the wall: and it seems difficult to assign them any other purpose, than that of resistance to the recoil of firearms.* The field-pieces seen in China, are generally mounted with swivels, for which these holes are well calculated; and though the parapets are not capable of resisting cannon shot, they are sufficiently strong to withstand these small pieces. Several of them were observed on the parade of the troops at Koo-pe-koo. They were mounted upon stands, on which they traversed with swivels. From these considerations, it does not seem unlikely, that the claim of the Chinese to a very early knowledge of the effects of gunpowder, is not without foundation."—pp. 196–8.

These extracts require but little comment to place their bearing in its just light. From the adaptation of the loopholes and embrasures of this fortification to the artillery of the Chinese, it does not at all follow,—as they would have us thence conclude,—that their knowledge of gunpowder is very ancient, but merely that their wall is, comparatively speaking, very modern. For the use of firearms, it shall presently be shown even from their own writings, had not commenced among them, as late as the reign of Kublāi-khan, the grandson of Jenghiz-khan, which ended less than five centuries and a half ago. Moreover, the very unskilful disposition, above exposed, of the bricks in this work, tells strongly against its reputed age. To give the masonry as much strength and durability as might be derived from its thickness, it is evident that the bricks should be laid in different ways, so that the several upright laminae composed of these ingredients might be partly intermixed, and not left, as they now are, without any bond of union between them, besides that supplied by the mortar. Still farther, the degree of deficiency of hardness in these bricks, which may be collected from the foregoing extracts, appears to be quite incompatible with the prodigious length of duration ascribed to them; for, notwithstanding the different opinion expressed by Captain Parish, the

only probable inference to be drawn from their colour, is, that they never were burned ;—a representation of the subject which I do not venture to put forward solely on my own judgment, but in which, I am happy to find, I am supported by the authority of a very eminent chemist of the present day.^a As to the kilns alluded to, they, surely, are far more likely to have been employed in burning lime for mortar or manure, than in baking bricks ; and, supposing them connected with the original erection of the wall, the very circumstance of some vestiges of them being yet extant, tends of itself to show that this barrier cannot be one of extraordinary antiquity. To the same conclusion are we also led by the form of the mound of earth that constitutes the main body of this unwieldy structure,

^a On referring the above-mentioned point to the consideration of Doctor Apjohn, Professor of Chemistry to the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, I was favoured with the following answer :

“ MY DEAR SIR,—After having maturely considered the passage in Sir George Staunton’s ‘ Account of an Embassy to China,’ to which you have directed my attention, I am strongly of opinion, that the bricks in question were never exposed to a high degree of heat. Had they been burned in the way which is here usual, I think it quite impossible that they could exhibit the colour ascribed to them. If the earth of which they are composed contained iron, they would be more or less red on the surface ; and if altogether destitute of this metal and of manganese,—a very unusual occurrence indeed,—they would be perfectly white. But upon no probable hypothesis can I account for their blue colour. It is to be regretted that Captain Parish has not been more minute, in his account of the experiments he made upon them. It would, in particular, be important to know whether they continued blue, after he had subjected them to heat. In the absence of information on this point, and of all details, as to the method by which he ascertained that, although exposed to a red heat, they did not shrink, I cannot think that any sufficient evidence has been adduced of the correctness of the conclusion to which he came. And, in reference to this latter point, I may observe, that the amount of contraction experienced by a brick, first dried perfectly in atmospheric air, upon exposure to a red heat, is so small, that it might easily have been overlooked by one not, in all probability, well provided with the means necessary for successfully conducting so delicate an observation. Yours, dear Sir, &c.—JAMES APJOHN, 28, Baggot-street, August 2, 1840.”

which is very nearly twice as high as it is thick, and of the same thickness at the top as at the bottom. Certainly a work of such materials and such construction is not at all calculated to last any very great length of time; and, accordingly, we may see, in the description of it already quoted from M. Des Hautesrayes, that the leaving it without repairs for about a single century, at the period when he wrote, was sufficient to reduce it nearly to a heap of ruins. Upon the whole, whatever may be the strength or weakness of each of the particulars just brought under consideration, their united bearing tends, I submit, powerfully and almost irresistibly to restrict the date of the building of the Chinese wall to comparatively modern times.

In the second place, the absence of all mention of the great wall in the earlier descriptions of China by foreigners, who yet show every disposition to magnify the wonders of that country, bears, silently, I admit, but still forcibly, against the existence of this structure in their time.

The oldest foreign account of China, next after the very scanty information given about it in the genuine part of the Sino-Syriac inscription, is conveyed in two Arabian narratives, one of which is dated in the year of the Hegira corresponding to the 851st of our era, and the other was composed somewhat later. Of these Renaudot published a French translation in 1718, from a MS. copy, the only one known to be extant, which he ascertained to have been then above 550 years old. The work thus presented to us, contains clear indications of its being the genuine production of persons who had either themselves visited China, or met with others that had actually been there; from among which I shall here notice, by the way, only one; that it frequently calls the Chinese capital by the same name as that used upon the Sino-Syriac monument, viz. Cumdan, though a name now wholly lost among the Chinese. But while this interesting document communicates many curious particulars (some of which I shall have occasion further on to advert to), it yet contains no allusion whatever to the Chinese wall. It may, perhaps, be said, that in those remote times the Arabians

resorting for the purposes of trade to Can-ton (which was then called Can-fu, the same as its modern denomination,^a as the second monosyllable *fu* is only an adjunct to denote the rank of the city), and going no farther into the country, could have no knowledge of what was most deserving of notice in its northern parts. But this will not account for the silence of their cotemporaries and countrymen, our authors, respecting the extensive structure in question, supposing it then in existence; for if it was, the Chinese, unless of a very different disposition and character from what they are of at present, would most assuredly have been loud in their praises of it to strangers, and would have the more freely enlarged upon its wonders, inasmuch as they incurred no immediate risk of their exaggerations on the subject being detected.

The next oldest account I can find of China is contained in the geographical treatise of Al-Edrisi; in which the portion of the earth known to him as inhabited, is distinguished, after the plan of Ptolemy, into climates or zones reckoned from the equator northward: and, as he divides each climate into ten Parts, arranged from west to east, China is included within the ninth and tenth Parts of those in which he places it, namely, the second and third climates. A minor limit to the age of this book is got, by combining two circumstances mentioned by the author; one of them in his description of Sicily, in the second Part of fourth climate, where he alludes to Roger as the reigning king; and the other, in his account of Jerusalem, in the fifth Part of third climate, where he speaks of this city as then in the hands of the Romans, that is, the Christians, which it ceased to be before the time of Roger II. Hence it follows that the Sicilian monarch intended was Roger I., who died A. D. 1151; and, consequently, that the original work under

^a Here it deserves to be noticed, that the town which was frequented chiefly by alphabetic writers, has preserved its ancient name; while the metropolis, to which they had not equally free access, and which probably had its oldest known denomination seldom written except in the national ideagrams, has no trace of that denomination retained among the Chinese.

consideration must have been written before the middle of the twelfth century. Of this a Latin translation, with the title *Geographia Nubiensis* (given to it from an opinion, which does not appear to rest on any sure foundation, that the author was a native of Nubia), was published at Paris in the year 1629; which I shall make use of on the present occasion.

Several towns of China are enumerated in this treatise, but by names of which no traces have been preserved; while some are referred to, in the north-eastern provinces, of which Edrisi acknowledges himself unable to tell how they were called. He makes frequent mention of Cumdan; but he gives this appellation, not to a city, but to a river, which he distinguishes as the greatest in China, and flowing through a land thickly inhabited. "Porrò flumen Chamdan Sinicum maximum est, et habitationibus adjacentibus non infrequens."—*Geographia Nubiensis*, p. 69. It is possible that the Kiang, which answers—especially in its size—to this description, may formerly have been called Cumdan, in consequence of having the metropolis of that name on its banks; on which ground Renaudot conjectures that Cumdan was the same as Nan-kin, which is adjacent to the river in question upon its southern side. But this inference is too vague to be much relied on: the only circumstance I can find to support it in the older work containing the narratives of the two Arabian travellers, is, that mention is therein made of a person who went from Can-fu (or Canton) to Cumdan, and spent two months in the journey;^a whence, considering the slow rate of travelling in China, it would appear, that the latter town could not have been situated any where in the northern part of the empire.

But the most interesting section of Edrisi's treatise, in reference to the immediate subject of the present inquiry, is the ninth Part of his third climate, comprehending within its limits

^a "Il eut ensuite la curiosité d'aller à la cour de l'Empereur, et estant parti de la ville de Canfu, il se rendit à Cumdan, après un voyage de deux mois."—*Anciennes Relations des Indes et de la Chine*, &c. p. 64.

the north-western portion of China; in which he notices, and particularizes by name, a town fortified on the northern frontier of that country, as a barrier against the incursions of a tribe of Tartars whom he calls the Baghargarene Turks. “*Urbs autem Darechun posita est ab orientali parte Kechæ, et ipsa terminat à septentrione limites Sin, eidemque contermina sunt ædificia terræ Turcharum Baghargarenorum. At verò urbs Atas super arduo monte constructa est, et contra vim Turcharum munita.*”^a—*Geographia Nubiensis*, p. 144. Now, supposing the Chinese wall to have existed in Edrisi’s time, how could he have heard of the lesser barrier here specified, without being also informed of the far greater one, erected in the same quarter, and applied to the same purpose? or how could he, if he

^a In another passage, Edrisi speaks of the land of these Turks as extending to the very eastern extremity of Asia. “—afferemus quod apud probatiores authores de his legimus. Quarè asserimus terræ Sin citerioris conterminas esse regiones Bagharghar mari orientali finitimas: ex ea verò parte quæ respicit regiones Farghanæ, terram Tobbat [i. e. Tibet] esse illi contiguam: nam terra Tobbat et portio terræ Indiæ attingunt Sin; habet autem à septentrione terram Chazalgæ; ab oriente, regiones Bagharghar. Extenditur autem terra Bagharghar usque ad mare orientale Tenebrosum.”—*Geogr. Nub.* p. 143. From combining the two passages it appears, that the country of the Baghargharene Turks lay to the north and north-east of China, reaching as far as the eastern sea; and, consequently, included the territories of both the Mogul and Mantchoo Tartars. M. Des Hautesrayes has collected from Chinese authorities that the Tartars of those regions were formerly called Turks; but he has, upon those authorities, thrown back the period when they were so denominated above 250 years earlier than the time when, according to Edrisi, they still continued to have this name. “Cette nation ne fit que changer de nom; car du reste elle est fort ancienne. Sous la première dynastie impériale des Hia elle s’appelloit *Hiun-yo*; sous celle des Chang, elle portoit le nom de *Koué-fang*; enfin sous celle des Tcheou, elle étoit connue sous le nom de *Hiun-yun*; sous les Tchin et les Han, elle porta le nom de *Hiong-nou* ou de *Huns*; sous les Tang [whose dynasty ended, according to the Chinese system of chronology, at a date corresponding to A. D. 907], celui de *Tou-kiueï* ou de *Turks*; et enfin sous les Song, celui de *Ki-tan*. Sous les Song, la horde des Ki-tan se rendit très-fameuse, comme on le verra. . . . Dans la suite celle de *Mongou* engloutit toutes les autres, éteignit la dynastie des Song, et s’empara de toute la Chine;—” *Hist. Gen. de la Chine*, tom. v. note à p. 343.

knew of the greater, omit all mention of it in this place? From the total silence, therefore, which has been observed by him upon the subject, the only inference that, I submit, can be rationally drawn, is, that the bulwark in question was not constructed till after the period when he wrote.

The passage last quoted from Edrisi, it may, by the way, be remarked, deserves notice on another account also; as it affords evidence (of a bearing quite undesigned on his side, and, consequently, above all suspicion) in proof of the falsehood of the remoter part of Chinese history. For if the statement he has made be true, that Atas was used in his time as a barrier to prevent the Turks, or Khi-tan Tartars,^a from entering China, it is evident that this fortification must have been so employed, not by either their own tribe, or one that had conquered theirs and had nothing to fear from it, but by the Chinese. According to his account, therefore, the northern division of the empire was in the hands of the original inhabitants about the middle of the twelfth century; whereas, according to the Chinese Annals, it was held in subjection, the whole of that century, by the Kin Tartars, after they had overpowered and dispossessed the Khi-tans, and the two preceding centuries by those Khi-tan Tartars. Here, then, we have a pretty clear indication, as well as sample, of the means by which the Board of History contrived to give a fictitious length to the duration of the Chinese empire, and the epoch from which they made this retrograde elongation commence. They could not venture to throw back the age of Jenghiz-khan, or the date of his invasion and conquest of China; as being matters of too general notoriety in Asia. But their antedating system is, in the above passage, disclosed to us, as setting out from the period which immediately preceded the occurrence of the events in question; and it appears that, in order to make the most of the comparatively few transactions which they had to spread over an increased extent of time, they trebled

^a In the preceding note it may be seen, deduced from Chinese authorities, that the Turks and Ki-tans were the same horde of Tartars.

the very first they had to deal with, by asserting that there were three successive Tartar subjugations of the country in place of one, and by representing those subjugations as having lasted for about four centuries and a half, instead of one and a half.

In connexion with the treatise of Al-Edrisi, naturally comes under consideration another very remarkable Arabic geography; that, I mean, of Abulfeda, Prince of Hamah, written about the year 1320, and which the author composed, as he tells us in his preface, in order to supply the defects and correct the faults of previous writers. Those from whom he quotes form a large number; from which circumstance, as well as from the high repute—much higher, indeed, than he deserved—in which he has always been held by the Arabians, it may, I apprehend, be fairly inferred, that he was acquainted with all that was known to this people upon the subject of geography, in the age in which he wrote. He improves upon the plan of Edrisi (of whom he speaks in terms of respect) by adding the longitudes and latitudes of sites; which he gives, it is true, with great looseness and inaccuracy; but still, in consequence of this addition, as well as from his use of less ancient names, it is much easier to identify the places described by him, than those mentioned by the older author. In his table of the twenty-sixth of the regions into which he has distributed the inhabited portions of the earth (called by him بلاد ماوراء النهر, *bilād māwarā al-nahār*, or the countries beyond *the* river, that is, beyond the river Oxus) he has inserted one city far to the east of all the rest, his account of which will, if I mistake not, be found to bear with considerable force upon the point under discussion. He places this city in الخطا, *al-khatā*, that is, in *Chataia*, or northern China; an allocation which is compatible with the very vague geographical designation he gives of its site; namely, between the longitudes $118^{\circ} 30'$ and $138^{\circ} 30'$,^a and

^a The longitudes specified in Abulfeda's table are 124° and 144° ; but I have reduced these by $5\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$; as he reckons from the meridian of Gibraltar, which is about so much to the west of the meridian of London.

between the latitudes $35^{\circ} 25'$ and 46° . But what completely determines the town he had in view, is the denomination he gives it, خان بالق, *khân-bālek*, which signifies in the Tartar language the *emperor's city*; ^a and was the name applied to *Pe-kin* during the Sino-Tartar dynasty of the descendants of Jenghiz-khan, and, consequently, that by which it was called at the very time when our author wrote.

A capital whose immediate territory (the province of Pe-tche-ly) is bounded on the northern side by the great wall, having been identified in Abulfeda's tables, it will be interesting to see what he relates of this city: as it is his plan to annex to each of those mentioned by him, a brief notice of whatever he knew to be remarkable, either in the place itself, or in the surrounding country; and, in consequence, there can scarcely be a doubt, but that we should here find inserted in his own sketch, or added by him to one, if so far defective, that he quoted from another, some account of the celebrated barrier in question, if it actually had existence in his time. I admit that against the knowledge, on his part, which this inference implies, may be urged the very vague description he gives of the site of Pe-kin, as well as the circumstance of his lumping together in one district, all the countries between this metropolis and the river Jihoon or Oxus. But, on the other hand, it is to be recollected, that there were great numbers of Mohammedans, including, of course, Arabians as well as other foreigners, in the armies of Jenghiz-khan, and that soldiers of this creed and nation continued in the service of the descendants of that conqueror, at all events, till the time of Marco's Polo's visit to China; that is, for above three quarters of a century, and till within thirty years of the period when our author composed his geography. Now it is quite impossible that the soldiers in question, who had repeatedly to march over the ground on which the wall is built, could have failed to take

^a Petis de la Croix gives the above etymology of the name, upon the authority of a Turkish writer: and Marco Polo assigns the like meaning for *Kan-balu*, which is evidently the same compound, a little altered in pronunciation.

notice of this structure, if it stood in their days; and Abulfeda cannot be supposed ignorant of what was known upon the subject, for several years before, to many of his countrymen. However few, then, and vague might be the particulars he had learned respecting Pe-kin and the adjoining land, the wonders of the far-famed wall must, upon the supposition before us respecting its age, have been included among them; and, consequently, all mention of it could not possibly have been here omitted: yet, I must say, he has not offered the slightest allusion to it in this place;—an assertion in which I am fully warranted by Greaves, who, in 1650, published, in the original Arabic, with a Latin translation, the twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth divisions of Abulfeda's work, together with its preface, after a careful and judicious collation of different MSS. copies. Of the manner in which he prepared those two sections for the press, he, in his introduction, gives the following account:—"Quid, erudite Lector, in his *Abulfedæ* Tabulis, quæ in majoris operis specimen eduntur, à me præstitum sit, æquanimittate tuâ fretus, paucis expediam. Eas, quâ potui fide, et diligentia, cum V exemplaribus MSS. contuli; uno doctissimi *Erpenii*, quod apographum est è bibliothecâ Serenissimi Principis Palatini; altero ipsissimo codice unde *Erpenius* suum exaraverat, qui dudum, mutatis sedibus, in bibliothecam Vaticanam migravit. His duos alios ex selectissimo eruditissimi *Pocockii* musæo adjeci. Quintum denique Constantinopoli emptum, sicubi hærebam, in consilium adhibui. His præsidii instructus, multa, quæ in singulis occurrebant, *σφάλματα* correxi; nihil temerè reponens (nam ea mihi semper in Auctoribus edendis religio visa est) nisi, aut ubi res ipsa fidem perspicuè firmaret, aut major pars codicum consentirent." He had it in contemplation to edit the entire work in a similar manner; and his high qualifications for the undertaking are thus attested by Renaudo:—"Gravier en estoit fort capable, parce qu'outre la connoissance parfaite des langues orientales, et qu'il avoit voyagé en Levant, il avoit celle des principaux auteurs, une profonde érudition, et il estoit grand mathématicien."—*An-*

ciennes Relations des Indes et de la Chine, &c. Pref. pp. xii–xiii.

These extracts will assist us in coming to a right decision with regard to the curious passage of Abulfeda's geography above referred to; which I now proceed to lay before the reader through the medium of Greaves's translation. "*Ebn Said*:"^a de magnitudine hujus civitatis, quæ feruntur, fidem superant. Metropolis est sermone mercatorum celebris; incolæ é *Chataiâ* originem ducunt. Fodinas argenti habent. Terræ *Chân Bálek* ab austro attingunt montes *Belhar*, qui præcipuus erat regum Indiæ."—*Chorasmicæ et Mawaralnahræ Descriptio, &c.* p. 64. Muller, in a dissertation at the end of his edition of the Latin version of the Travels of Marco Polo, translates the same passage rather more literally, but with no essential alteration of the meaning, as follows: "Chanbalek. Memorantur de magnitudine hujus civitatis *nonnulla* quæ intellectum superant. Est autem metropolis, eaque ex mercatorum relationibus celebris. Incolæ Chataini generis sunt. Ibi fodinæ argenti sunt. Terra item Chanbalech vicina est ad austrum montibus Belhar regis regum Indiæ."—*Disquisitio Geographica et Historica de Chataia*, pp. 15–16.^b Both these versions completely bear me out, in the

^a The writer from whom the above description is taken. His name is, in the original, preceded by a word indicating that the adduced statement is quoted from him. Dr. Wüstenfeld of Gottingen, in a dissertation subjoined to his edition of the eighth, ninth, and eighteenth sections of Abulfeda's geography, gives the following information respecting the older author. "Ibn Sa'id, Maurus Granata-Hispanus, duorum potissimum librorum historicorum auctor est, quibus in conscribendis annalibus se usum fuisse dicit Abulfeda; . . . Obiit Ibn Sa'id anno 673 (Chr. 1274)."—*Abulfedæ Tabulæ quædam Geographicae, &c.* p. 86. It is a curious instance of corresponding idiomatic forms of expression in two very different languages, that *Ebn*, or *Ibn*, which is a common ingredient in the Arabic names of learned men, denotes properly *a son*; and that *Tsze*, one of the Chinese names for a philosopher, has the same primary signification.

^b The following is the original passage, as edited by Greaves, and very nearly as it is given by Muller; the principal difference being, that the one

inference I have drawn from the original passage, against the existence of the great wall of China in the author's time; and the discussion might be here closed, if there were no other reading of that passage: but there are introduced into it, in one edition of the work, four additional lines of an opposite tendency, the spurious nature of which remains to be exposed. Those lines Muller gives after his first reading of the passage, with the observation that they appear "in aliâ editione post vocem الخطا;" and he turns them into Latin as follows:—
 "Ac propter amplitudinem hanc constituta est civitas *Tamgagi*. Hoc est regnum Chata (Golius: 'cujus regio est terra Chatai'; additque Chataëorum imperatorem Tamgagium dici). Existimant autem viatores, quod murus ille qui habitationes eorum ambit, viginti tribus diætis ab occidente in orientem protendatur."—*Disquisitio Geographica et Historica de Chataia*, p. 16. This supplement, I admit, contains an allusion to the Chinese wall, but I must add, that it fits very badly in the place assigned to it, viz. immediately after the sentence in which the word Chataia occurs:^a what, however, is more material to observe, is that Greaves could not but have seen it; as he knew all that was known upon the subject in his day, and Golius, Professor of Arabic at Leyden, who is here parenthetically introduced

heads it with the name of the author from whom it is quoted, and the other, with that of the town to which the description contained in it is applied:—

قال ابن سعيد و يذكر من عظم هذه المدينة ما يستبعده
 العقل و هي قاعدة مشهورة علي السن التجار و اهلها من
 جنس الخطا و عندهم معادن الفضة و يلي بلاد خان بالق
 من الجنوب جبال بلهر املك ملوك الهند

^a The whole would be rather more coherent, if the additional lines were inserted immediately before the sentence, *Incolæ Chataini generis sunt*, instead of coming after it. But then, it would be the wall of the town, instead of that of China, to which the context would refer.

commenting on the meaning of one of its clauses, was not only a cotemporary, but also an acquaintance of his. The non-insertion, therefore, of the lines in question in his edition of the text of the twenty-sixth section, cannot be accounted for by the supposition of their having been recovered since his time ; but must be attributed to his positive rejection of them as an obviously spurious interpolation : and, in truth, they cannot rationally be viewed in any other light, when the circumstance of their not being found in the principal manuscript copies of the work is considered, in combination with the substance of their contents. They may be very easily conceived to have been at first introduced as a marginal note, by some reader who had heard of the wall, after the report of its great antiquity had got into circulation ; and to have been afterwards embodied in the text, by a copyist who thought he was thereby doing credit to the author and increasing the merit of the work. But if they had formed part of the original composition, how could they ever after have been left out ? Certainly they could not by design ; as no one who took the trouble of transcribing the book, would purposely injure it, by the omission of what, if genuine, must have been by far the most important ingredient of the entire paragraph : and, on the other hand, they occupy too great a space, in comparison with the length of the rest of the sketch, and refer to an object of too striking a nature, to admit of their having been overlooked, and dropped through inadvertence. The very nature of the case, then, as well as the judgment of Greaves, fully authorizes the rejection of those lines ; and they afford no just ground of objection to the conclusion to which the genuine part of the paragraph they have been surreptitiously joined with, leads, respecting the comparative modernness of the Chinese wall, and the fact of its having been erected since the age in which the Prince of Hamah flourished.

The part of our author's work more immediately connected with the point under discussion, namely, his section upon China, I have not had an opportunity of consulting ; but Renaudot

supplies the following translation of his preliminary remarks upon that country :—" Voicy donc ses paroles dans le discours qui precede le peu qu'il rapporte des principales villes du pays. ' La Chine est bornée à l'Occident, par le desert qui la separe des Indes ; au Midy, par la mer, aussi-bien qu'à l'Orient ; *et au Septentrion par les pays de Gog et de Magog, et d'autres dont nous n'avons aucune connoissance.* Les Geographes rapportent, à la verité, plusieurs noms de lieux et de rivières de la Chine. Mais comme nous en ignorons la prononciation, aussi-bien que le veritable estat de ce païs-la, ils nous sont comme inconnus ; d'autant plus que nous ne trouvons personne qui en soit venu, et de qui nous puissions nous en informer avec exactitude. C'est pourquoy, nous n'en dirons que ce qui en a esté escrit par les auteurs qui nous ont precedé.' "—*Anciennes Relations des Indes et de la Chine, &c.* Pref. pp. xvi-xvii. The learned French writer adduces this passage to show how little Abulfeda knew of China ; but, as I have already proved, his ignorance of the Celestial Empire could not have reached the extreme degree of his never having heard of the Chinese wall, if standing in his day ; and, consequently, his omitting to mention it in the very place where he is actually describing the northern boundaries of China (I here take for granted, what there appears no reason to doubt, that the translation before us is correct) not only supports the view of the subject that has been already submitted to the reader, but also affords an independent proof of this barrier not having been constructed till after the time when Abulfeda's geography was written.

Of about the same age as the work just examined, and of the same tendency, in reference to the point in question, is the composition of Haithon, an Armenian soldier of royal descent ; who, in the latter part of his life, turned monk, and, under the auspices of Pope Clement the Fifth, endeavoured to incite the powers of Europe to a fresh crusade. His Oriental History, including that of the first six Tartar emperors of China,—written under his dictation in French, and thence translated into

Latin in the year 1307,^a—commences with a description of Cathay, of which he relates some curious particulars; but neither in this description, nor in the subsequent narrative, does he make any mention whatever of the Chinese wall. He is entitled to credit for some degree of accuracy, from the manner in which he distinguishes between the different sources of his information; for he states that he framed the first part of his account, which reaches to the death of the fourth emperor, from Tartar histories; the second, relative to events which took place during the earlier years of the reign of the fifth emperor, from what he had heard from an uncle; and, the remainder, from his own personal observation.^b His candour is shown in the

^a The following is the note, upon this subject of his amanuensis, which is prefixed to the translation in question:—"Hæ sunt historiæ partium Orientis, à religioso viro, Fratre Haythono, Domino Churchi, consanguineo regis Armeniæ, compilatæ. Quas ego Nicolaus Salconi, ex mandato summi Pontificis, Domini Clementis Papæ quinti, in civitate Pictavensi, primò scripsi in Gallico idiomate, sicut idem Frater Haythonus mihi ore dictabat, absque nota, sine aliquo exemplari. Et de Gallico transtuli in Latinum, anno M.CCC.VII., mense augusto." Hence, it would appear, that our author was unable to write in the Roman character; but, as in the course of the narrative, he speaks of having consulted Tartar records, he must have understood the Tartar alphabet; and it is most likely, that as an oriental Christian, he was besides acquainted with the Syriac method of writing. But, on account of the use to which Pope Clement wanted to apply this work, it was necessary that it should be drawn up in a form in which it could be most easily and generally read by Europeans.

^b "Præterea hujus operis compiler ea quæ narrat et scribit in isto libro, tribus modis asserit se scivisse. Nam ab initio Changii Can, qui fuit primus imperator Tartarorum, usque ad Mango Can, qui fuit quartus imperator, narrat ea fideliter quæ in Tartarorum historiis continentur. A Mango Can verò usque ad mortem Haoloni, ea quæ narrat et scribit, scivit et audivit per dominum avunculum suum, qui præsens fuit illis temporibus, omnibus prænotatis, et cum magna diligentia narrabat hæc filiis et nepotibus, et faciebat redigi in scriptis, ut melius memoriter tenerent. Ab initio quidem Abaga Can [this personage, notwithstanding the title annexed to his name, was not emperor, but nephew of the fifth emperor Kublaï-khan, under whom he held, by a species of feudal tenure, a kingdom consisting of Persia and some adjacent countries], usque ad finem tertiæ partis hujus libri, ubi finem capiunt historiæ

acknowledgment he makes, that the records he consulted for the beginning of his work, were very defective in dates;—a fault which he attributes to the circumstance of the Tartars having then but recently got the benefit of alphabetic writing.^a It does not appear from his narrative that he ever was in China; for the latter part of it, which he gives as an eye witness, relates only to transactions which occurred in central or western Asia; but, for a length of time, he had continual intercourse with the Tartar soldiers of the Celestial empire, serving with them in the same armies, against their common enemy, the Saracens. How is it possible then, that he could have failed to have heard of the Chinese wall from those soldiers, if it really existed in their day? and does not his total silence respecting it strongly point out the necessity of referring its construction to a later age than that in which he lived?

Hitherto I have availed myself of the works only of such eastern authors as, on the supposition of the early existence of the Chinese wall, must have heard of it; I now come to the diary of one who, upon the same supposition would necessarily have seen it, and have had it, for several months together, directly in view, or, at any rate, within reach of inspection, yet has not once mentioned it. The document to which I allude is to be found in Part IV. of M. Thevenot's publication, in two volumes, entitled *Relations de divers Voyages curieux*; and is his abridgment in French of a Journal of the Embassy sent by Shah Rokh, the son of Tamerlane, to the emperor of China, in the year 1419;—an abridgment, however, that is by far too

Tartarorum, scivit ipse, tanquam ille qui præsens fuit.”—*Haithoni Armeni Hist. Orient.*, cap. xlv.

^a “Et non est mirandum, si in istis historiis non posui tempus certum: quoniam, licet à multis scire quæsiverim veritatem, non tamen potui invenire, qui super talibus plenariè me doceret. Et credo quod talis sit ratio, quare tempus certum istarum historiarum penitùs ignoratur, quia ab initio Tartari literas non habebant; et sic tempora et rerum gesta transibant, absque eo quod ab aliquo notarentur, et per hunc modum oblivioni postea tradebantur.”—*Haithoni Armeni Hist. Orient.*, cap. xvi.

copious to admit of the supposition of there having been omitted in it any important feature of its Persian original. The following passages are extracted from this translation :

“ L’an 1419, ou 822 de l’Hegire,^a Schahrokh envoya des ambassadeurs au païs du Khataï. Schadi Khogia étoit le chef de l’ambassade, et le Prince Mirza Baisangar son fils y envoya en même temps de sa part Sultan Ahmed et le peintre Kogia Gaiats Eddin, qui eut ordre de faire un Journal exact du voyage, et de remarquer tout ce qu’il verroit dans chaque ville et dans chaque païs, la difficulté ou facilité des chemins, la description des païs et des édifices, la police et les coûtumes des villes, la grandeur et la magnificence des souverains, leur conduite dans le gouvernement de leurs états. Ils furent de retour à la ville de Horat, d’où ils étoient partis, le 11. de la lune de Ramazan^b de l’année 825, avec de riches presens de la part de l’Empereur du Khataï, et raconterent des choses merveilleuses et surprenantes du païs d’où ils venoient. Mais parce que Kogia Gaiats Eddin en a fait une relation tres-curieuse et tres-

^a As the Hegira occurred in the 622nd year of our era, or after 621 years of that era had been completed, it might at first view appear, that the Christian date, corresponding to the Mohammedan one 822, should be 1443. But it is to be recollected, that the Mohammedan years are lunar, consisting only of 354 days, or of 355, when an intercalation becomes necessary to accommodate them to the apparent motions of the moon. A hundred, therefore, of those years, fall short of a century by about three of our years ; and when the above specified number of them is reduced at this rate, it will be found that the year of our Lord 1419, is rightly made to synchronise with the year of the Hegira 822.

^b For the convenience of the reader who is unacquainted with the Arabic year, and may wish to ascertain the interval of time between any two of the dates in the above extracts, I subjoin a list of the months of this year in their order, and with their names written in the same manner as they are given by M. Thevenot. Those with the odd ordinals prefixed, consist of thirty days, and those with the even ordinals of twenty-nine, except in the case of embolimean years, in which the twelfth month has thirty days. 1. Muharrem, 2. Safar, 3. Rabi-elevvel, 4. Rabi-elakhir, 5. Giumadi-elevvel, 6. Giumadi-elakhir, 7. Regeb, 8. Schaban, 9. Ramazan, 10. Schouval, 11. Zi-lkaadeh, 12. Zi-lhigeh.

veritable, nous nous remettons à ce qu'il en a dit. En voicy la substance."—*Ambassade de Schahrokh, fils de Tamerlan, et d'autres Princes ses voisins, à l'Empereur du Khatai*, p. 1.

" Le 14. de la Lune de Schaban, ils arriverent à un lieu d'où il n'y a que dix journées de route jusques a Sekgiva,^a premiere ville du Khataï. Le 17. de la même Lune les Ambassadeurs continuerent leur route toujours par le desert, et arriverent au bout de quelques jours à Caraoul. Caraoul est une forteresse bien munie, disposée de telle maniere dans la montagne, qu'elle barre le chemin; qu'il faut entrer par une de ses portes, et sortir par l'autre. Lorsque les Ambassadeurs entrerent, les Khataïens ne se contenterent pas de les conter eux et leurs gens, on mit encore leurs noms par écrit. De Caraoul ils allerent à la ville de Sekgiou, où ils furent logez dans un grand logement public élevé au dessus de la porte, et là les Khataïens se chargerent de leur bagage, dont ils tinrent compte piece par piece dans un registre. Sekgiou est une ville grande et forte en forme de quarré parfait. Les murailles de la ville sont flanquées de tours convertes par le haut, de vingt pas en vingt pas. Comme la ville est quarrée, chaque côté a une porte posée de telle maniere, qu'elles se regardent toute quatre en droite ligne; ce qui fait qu'elles paroissent être prés l'une de l'autre, quoy qu'elles soient fort éloignées: ainsi elles se voyent toutes du milieu de la ville. Au dessus de chaque porte il y a un pavillon à deux étages, dont le toit est en dos d'âne, suivant la maniere des Khataïens, Cette ville est donc la premiere de Khataï, éloignée de quatre-vingt-dix-neuf journées de la ville de Kan Balik, qui est le lieu de la residence de l'Empereur, par un país tres-peuplé, car chaque journée on loge dans un gros bourg. De Sekgiou à Kamgiou, qui est une autre ville plus grande que Sekgiou, il y a

^a The imperfection of the Persian mode of writing words is exemplified in the above name, the original of which is read by M. Thevenot in three different ways, Sekgiva, Sekgiou, and Sokgiou. The last of these readings appears to be the right one.

neuf journées, et le Dankgi qui y fait sa residence est au dessus de tous les Dankgis des confins. . . . C'etoit le 25. de la Lune de Ramazan, lorsque le Dankgi fit le festin aux Mussulmans dans la ville de Kamgiou. . . . Enfin ils arrivoient tous les jours dans un Jam ou logement, et chaque semaine dans une ville, jusqu'à ce qu'ils vinrent le 4. de la Lune de Schouval aux bords du fleuve Caramouran, qui est grand comme le Gihoun ou Oxus ; il est traversé d'un pont de vingt-six bateaux arrêtez ensemble, avec des chaînes attachées d'une rive à l'autre à des colonnes de fer, de la grosseur de la cuisse d'un homme ils arriverent le 12. de la Lune de Zi-lkaade à un fleuve un fois plus large que le Gihoun, qu'ils passerent heureusement en bateau. . . . Les Ambassadeurs continuerent ainsi leur marche, faisant quatre ou cinq parasanges par jour jusques au 8. de la Lune de Zi-lhigeh, qu'ils arriverent à la porte Khan Balik un peu avant le jour. C'est une ville si grande, que chaque pan de ses murailles a un parasange de long ; mais parce que les maisons n'étoient pas encore achevées de rebâtir, il y avoit cent mille adossées contre les murailles."^a—pp. 2-5.

^a The principal part of Pe-kin was built by Kublaï-khan, as we are informed by Marco Polo in the following passage of his work :—" The city of Kambalu is situated near a large river in the province of Kataia, and was in ancient times eminently magnificent and royal. The name itself implies ' the city of the sovereign.' But his majesty having imbibed an opinion from the astrologers, that it was destined to become rebellious to his authority, resolved upon the measure of building another capital, upon the opposite side of the river, where stand the palaces just described : so that the new and the old cities are separated from each other only by the stream that runs between them. The new-built city received the name of *Tai-du*,—" *Marsden's edition*, p. 297. And De Guignes gives the date of the transaction as follows : " on acheva encore la ville qui porta le titre de *Ta-tou*, ou *grande cour* [in the margin is annexed l'an 1267], à quelques stades au nord-est d'Yen-king. C'est ce que nous appellons proprement Peking,—" *Hist. des Mogols de la Chine*, liv. xvi. p. 150. If the information contained in these two extracts be combined with that incidentally given in the above passage of Gaiats Eddin's Journal, it will be seen that the whole of Pe-kin was rebuilt only a century and a half after the first erection of the principal part of it ;—no great proof of the durability of the buildings of the Chinese, certainly not such as

“Les Ambassadeurs demeurèrent dans cette ville, depuis la huitième de la Lune de Zi-lhigeh de l'année 822 jusqu'au premier de la Lune de Gemadi elevvel de l'année 823, qui sont cinq Lunes, —” p. 8.

“Le 24. de la Lune de Schaban, ils arriverent à la ville de Kamgiou, qui est celle où en allant ils avoient laissé leurs domestiques, et leur gros bagage qui leur fut rendu en son entier ; mais parce qu'il n'y avoit pas alors de sureté pour passer par le Mogolistan, ils y firent un séjour de dix mois et demy. Après ce retardement ils partirent de Kamgiou le 7. de la Lune de Zi-lkaadeh, et arriverent à Sokgiou le 9. dans le même temps qu'Emir Hussim, Ambassadeur de Mirza Ibrahim Sultan, qui venoit de Schiraz, et Pehlevan Gemul, Ambassadeur de Mirza Rustan, qui venoit de Espahan, y arriverent aussi, rapportant qu'ils avoient trouvé de grandes difficultez dans le chemin, ce qui obligea les Ambassadeurs de rester encore du temps dans cette ville-là, d'où ils partirent au plein de la Lune de Muharrem de l'année 825. Après quelques jours de marche ils arriverent à la ville de Caraoul, dont les magistrats dirent que la loy des Khataïens étoit de faire le même examen des étrangers à leur retour, que l'on avoit à leur entrée dans le païs, et apporterent leur registre pour le confronter, que s'ils y manquoient ils encoureroient la disgrâce de l'Empereur. Enfin la visite faite ils sortirent de Karoul le 19. de la Lune Muharrem, et pour éviter les difficultez et les empêchemens qu'ils craignoient à cause de la guerre, ils prirent la route du desert, où ils souffrirent beacoup à cause de la disette d'eau, jusques au 16. du mois Rabie elevvel qu'ils sortirent de ce desert, —” pp. 12-13.

There can be no doubt but that the two frontier towns of China, named in this Journal Sokgiou and Kamgiou, are the So-tchou and Kan-tchou of Arrowsmith's map ; of which the former is not far from, and the latter is quite close to the great wall. The fortress Caraoul, therefore, which is described as a

would warrant the supposition of any portion of their mason-work having lasted above two thousand years.

barrier in the mountains through which the ambassadors entered the country, and as being within two or three days journey of Sokgiou, was most probably built upon ground over which the wall now runs. With this identification of the positions of the first three places in China that are mentioned, accords the distance of the third from the Hoang-ho, called here by its Tartar name Caramouran;^a which the ambassadors are stated to have passed on the ninth day after they had been invited to a feast by the governor of Kamgiou. With the same identification also agrees the circumstance told of their having a second time crossed this river,^b on their way to Khan-Balik, or Pe-kin; for had they entered China at any more southern point, they would have had to go over the Hoang-ho but once. On their return they remained a long time at two of the three places just specified, at one of which the wall, if then standing, must have been actually within view. Now let it be taken into consideration, that Gaiats Eddin was particularly directed to keep an exact account of whatever he saw remarkable in his way through China;—that, from his talent for drawing, no curious object of sight was likely to escape his notice;—that he has given a description of fortified places along the line of the Chinese wall;—and that he spent several months in the neighbourhood of part of that line. Surely when these circumstances are combined with his total silence respecting the extraordinary structure in question, they tell in the most decisive and convincing manner against its existence till after the period at which he wrote.

To the separate bearing of the several oriental authorities now adduced, may be added the joint effect of the evidence of

^a “—le Hoam-ho, c'est-à-dire, le Fleuve Jaune ou bourbeux. Les Tartares le nomment Cara-mouran ou le Fleuve Noir, et Marc-Paul, Caramoran.”—*Hist. des anciens Huns par M. De Guignes*, liv. i. note à p. 21.

^b Our author appears to have thought that the large river which the ambassadors crossed on the second occasion, was a different one from what they went over first; but there is no river of the size he mentions to be met with between the Hoang-ho and the capital, except the Hoang-ho itself in the winding of its course.

many more, brought collectively under examination, by means of the history of Jenghiz khan, which the elder Petis de la Croix composed from the works of a great number of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish writers. In this history, indeed, mention once occurs (Book i. Chap. viii., and page 101 of the English translation already referred to) of the Chinese wall, and of Jenghiz-khan's entrance into China by one of its gates, through the treachery of the officer to whom the guarding of this pass was entrusted: but the anecdote is related solely on the authority of the Persian historian Mirkhond, who, from the date to which he brings down his Annals, could not have written them sooner than the beginning of the sixteenth century,^a or till about a century and a half after the termination of the Mogul dynasty in China. From a comparison, therefore, of the evidence thus supplied to us, with that to be derived from the separate accounts previously considered—especially the last of them,—it would appear that the clumsy barrier in question was erected between the years of our era 1420 and 1500; and, as it must have had some appearance of age at the latter epoch, when the report of its great antiquity was in circulation, the probability is, that it was built not long after the former one.

All the early European accounts of China, as far as I can find, lead precisely to the same conclusion as that arrived at in the foregoing pages, on the subject under examination. I shall here notice only those of Plano Carpini, Rubruquis, Marco Polo, and Sir John Maundevile. The first two are due to the alarm excited in Europe by the progress which the Tartars made westward, soon after the death of Jenghiz-khan. It is stated by the elder Petis de la Croix, in the English translation of his historic work already referred to, that “— Batou-Can [a

^a The following is the account of the work above referred to, which is given by M. Herbelot in his *Bibliothèque Orientale*. “*Raoudhat Al-Safá*. C'est le titre que le fameux Emir Khouand Schah, que nous appellons ordinairement Mirkhond, a donné son Histoire Générale depuis la Creation du Monde jusqu'en l'an 900 de l'Hegire; écrite en langue Persienne, et en plusieurs volumes.”

grandson of Jenghiz, who had a feudal kingdom assigned to him in the north-western part of the vast empire founded by that warrior] conquered the Alani, the Assites, the Russians, or Muscovites, the Bulgares, and several other nations. He even crossed through Russia, and pillaged and ravaged Poland, Moravia, Dalmatia; and marched into Hungary to go and besiege Constantinople; but death came and interrupted his great designs in the year 1256. After the death of Batou-Can, Bereke-Can, his brother, succeeded him, and became a Mahometan desirous to execute some part of Batou's designs, he went as far as Constantinople, and ravaged all the country."—p. 387. It is no wonder that, during the course of these transactions considerable uneasiness was felt by the European sovereigns; and the consequence was, that they took every opportunity they could, of despatching emissaries to the east, apparently for the purpose of inducing the Tartars to become Christians, but in reality with a view to sounding the intentions of the great Khan, or Lord paramount of the Sino-Mogul empire, who usually held his court, for the greater part of the year, at Pe-kin. In this manner the Minorite friars, Plano Carpini and Rubruquis, were sent to China, the former by the Pope in 1246, and the latter by the French government in 1253. Their narratives, the oldest, I believe, that are extant, written with any reference to that country by European authors, may be seen in the first volume of Hakluyt's collection of *The Principall Navigations, Voiages, &c.* printed at London in 1598. Carpini states, that he was above sixteen months among the Tartars, making upon every subject the most diligent inquiries;^a to

^a "Unde quæcunque pro vestra utilitate vobis scribimus ad cautelam, tanto securius credere debetis, quanto nos cuncta vel ipsi vidimus oculis nostris, qui per annum et quatuor menses et amplius ambulavimus per ipsos [Tartaros] et cum ipsis, ac fuimus inter eos, vel audivimus a Christianis qui sunt inter eos captivi, et, ut credimus, fide dignis. Mandatum etiam a supremo Pontifice habebamus, ut cuncta perscrutaremur, et videremus omnia diligenter. Quod tam nos quàm frater Benedictus ejusdem ordinis, qui nostræ tribulationis fuit socius et interpret, fecimus studiose."—*Hakluyt's Voyages, &c.* vol. i. p. 22.

which this people do not appear to have offered any obstruction, not feeling the same jealousy against strangers as the Chinese do: and the probability is, that their rulers the more freely allowed him to pursue those inquiries, as they were eager to learn in turn from him, whatever they could, respecting Europe. Under these circumstances it is obvious that he must have seen or heard of the Chinese wall, had it been previously built, and would naturally have mentioned it in his account of the invasion of China by Jenghiz-khan, and of the obstacles surmounted by that general, before his armies took the city of Pe-kin. Yet, neither here, nor in any other part of our author's narrative, does he ever allude to this barrier. In his description, indeed, of the siege of Pe-kin and of the preceding campaigns, he relates some particulars that are scarcely credible:^a but while the

^a “Mongali autem in terram eorum revertentes se contra Kytaos [the natives of Kathay, which is called by this writer Kitaia] in prælium præparaverunt, et castra moventes terram eorum intraverunt. Imperator autem Kytaorum hoc audiens venit contra eos cum exercitu suo; et commissum est prælium durum; in quo prælio Mongali fuerunt devicti: et omnes nobiles Mongallorum qui erant in prædicto exercitu, fuerunt occisi usque ad septem. Cyngis verò et alii qui remanserunt, in terram suam fugerunt. Et cum aliquantulum quievisset Cyngis, præparavit se rursus ad prælium, et contra terram Huyrorum [the Yugures] processit ad bellum. Isti homines Christiani de secta Nestorianorum erant, quos etiam bello devicit, et eorum literas acceperunt. Nam prius scripturam aliquam non habebant. Nunc autem eandem literam Mongallorum appellant. Inde processit contra terram Sarvivorum, et contra terram Karavitarum, et contra terram Voyrat, et contra terram Comana; quas terras omnes devicit. Inde est in terram suam reversus. Et cum aliquantulum quievisset, convocatis omnibus gentibus supradictis, contra Kytaos ad bellum processit, et cum diu contra eos pugnasset, magnam partem terræ Kytaorum vicerunt: Imperatorem autem eorum concluserunt in sua civitate majori: quam cum tam diu obsiderunt quod exercitui defecerunt expensæ, et cum non haberent quod manducarent, præcepit illis Cyngis can, quod de decem hominibus unum darent ad manducandum. Illi autem de civitate pugnabant viriliter contra illos sagittis et machinis: et cum deficerent lapides, pro lapidibus projecerunt argentum, et maximè liquefactum. Civitas enim hæc multis divitiis erat plena. Et cum diu pugnassent, et eam bello vincere minimè possent, fecerunt unam magnam viam sub terra ab exercitu usque ad mediam civitatem, et aperientes subito terram, eis nescientibus prosilierunt in medio civitatis, et pugnabant cum

love of the marvellous thus displayed by him, detracts from his authority as an historian, it increases the likelihood of his enlarging on the wonders of the bulwark in question, had it been then in existence ; and, consequently, strengthens the argument against its being so old, which is to be derived from his silence on the subject. The proof to the same effect which is supplied by the like silence of Rubruquis, is, I admit, not equally strong ; because the entire work of this latter author has not been preserved. Near the end, however, of the extant part, he incidentally mentions his having been in Tangut, just before he proceeds to the description of Cathay ;^a and, as those two countries are separated by the Chinese wall, he must have crossed the ground on which it stands, in going from one of them to the other : his failing, therefore, to take any notice of it in this place, tells very forcibly against its having been erected till after his time. I should add that, in like manner as his precursor, he shows much fondness for the wonderful in his de-

hominibus civitatis ; et illi qui erant extra simili modo pugnabant, et concidentes portas intraverunt civitatem : et occidentes Imperatorem et homines plures, civitatem possidebant ; et aurum et argentum et omnes divitias abstulerunt. Et cum terræ prædictæ Kytaorum suos homines præfecissent, in terram propriam sunt reversi. Et tunc Imperatore Kytaorum devicto, factus est [Cyngis] Imperator. Quandam autem partem terræ Kytaorum, quæ posita est in mari, usque in hodiernum diem nullatenus devicerunt.”—*Hakluyt’s Voyages*, &c. vol. i. pp. 27–8. Besides the omission of all mention of the Chinese wall in this sketch, which, however imperfect it may be, is still the most circumstantial of all the early European accounts of the invasion and conquest of northern China by Jenghiz-khan, it deserves to be noticed, that he is here represented as having, in the course of those transactions, had to contend with the aboriginal Chinese, and not at all with the Kin Tartars, as stated in the *Annals of China*.

^a “Tangut vidi homines magnos sed fuscus. . . . Ultra est magna Cathaya, cujus incolæ antiquitus, ut credo, dicebantur Seres. Ab ipsis enim veniunt optimi panni serici. Et ille populus dicitur Seres a quodam oppido eorum. Bene intellexi quod in illa regione est oppidum habens muros argenteos et propugnacula aurea. In ista terra sunt multæ provinciæ, quarum plures adhuc non obediunt Moallis. Et inter . . . aliqua desiderantur.”—*Hakluyt’s Voyages*, &c. vol. i. p. 92.

scriptions;—a circumstance which bears upon the question before us, just the same way in the case of one of those writers, as it does in that of the other.

But of all the European visitors of China, Marco Polo appears to be the one whose silence respecting the great wall is most at variance with the supposition of its existence in early times. He spent seventeen years in the country, and was in the constant practice of taking notes of whatever he saw in it that was any way remarkable;—he generally crossed the barrier in question at least twice during each of those years, in his attendance on the emperor, whose custom it was to pass the summer months in Tartary, and the remainder of the year at Pe-kin;—and he was detained a year, on his entrance into China, at Kampion or Kan-tchou, in the immediate vicinity of this barrier. His words upon the last point (as translated by Mr. Marsden, whose edition of this work is, I believe, the best that has been published) are as follow:—“Kampion, the chief city of the province of Tanguth, is large and magnificent, and has jurisdiction over all the province. In this city Marco Polo remained, along with his father and uncle, about the space of one year, which the state of their concerns rendered necessary.”—*Marsden's edition*, pp. 181–2. These words, I may observe, bear upon the inquiry before us much more strongly than by the mere consideration of what is omitted in them; for, when the author states that Kampion was the chief city of the province of Tangut, he gives by implication his positive evidence, that the wall by which it is now separated from that province, was not standing in his day.

Mr. Marsden endeavours to reconcile Marco Polo's failure to notice the wall with the truth of the Chinese account of its age, by supposing that he did not cross, but only went along it, at its western extremity; and by adducing a passage from P. Gerbillon to show that, near that extremity, it was built chiefly of earth, and was, in the learned father's time, in so ruinous a state that he was able in several places to pass it on horseback:—“Depuis le commencement de la province de Chansi, jusqu'à

l'autre extrémité, qui est à l'occident, cette muraille n'est plus que de terre, ou plutôt c'est une terrasse qui s'est démentie en bien des endroits, et que j'ai passé et repassé plusieurs fois à cheval. Il est vrai que de distance en distance on trouve des tours, qui en quelques endroits sont encore de pierre ou de brique, mais la plupart ne sont que de terre."—*Marsden's edition*, p. 234. With respect to the first point, the wall, it is obvious, would be just as likely to arrest the attention of a person who travelled along the line of it for a considerable way, as of one who passed through any of its gates; and with respect to the second, it does not follow from the circumstance of this wall being in a very dilapidated state in 1690, that it must have been equally so four hundred years before; or from its being tumbled to the ground in some places at the western end, that it must have been in the same state in the eastern part of its course. But granting for a moment P. Gerbillon's description of the ruinous condition of this structure in the province of Chansi, to apply to every part of it, at the period when it is supposed to have come under the inspection of Marco Polo, surely, even in this condition, it must have been an object of great curiosity to any stranger, and particularly to one of his prying disposition. In fact, Mr. Marsden's reasoning upon the subject is of no force, unless it be pushed to the length of proving that the whole of the Chinese wall was absolutely *invisible* at the time in question;—a result in which I would entirely agree with him, though not exactly upon the grounds on which he approached to it. He did not, however, venture to go quite so far; and, in consequence, was obliged virtually to abandon his argument, by admitting that the excuse he offered for the Venetian traveller was insufficient. Here are his words: "— if [when Marco entered Kataia] the wall did not ostensibly or effectively exist, or was not a conspicuous object, his omitting to notice it cannot be matter of surprise. But at the same time it must be admitted, that afterwards, in the course of his service, he had numberless opportunities of observing this extraordinary mass of building on the northern frontier; and

his not making it the subject of a chapter, or even adverting to it incidentally, justly affords ground for animadversion.”—*Introduction*, pp. xxxvii–xxxviii. There is but one proviso requisite to justify in the fullest manner this censure of Marco: he certainly was very reprehensible for neglecting to give us any information about the wall, *if* it really was built before he went to China.

Sir John Maundevile’s silence with respect to the Chinese wall is worth noticing, only as bringing down the European evidence against its antiquity about half a century later than that derived from Marco Polo’s travels. Sir John served as a military man in the armies of the Emperor of China for fifteen months; during which time it is hardly to be conceived but that he must have seen or heard of this extensive barrier, had it been so long ago constructed. His motive for engaging in this service is told by him in the following terms:—“And zee schulle undirstonde, that my fellowes and I, with oure Zomen, we serveden this Emperour, and weren his Soudyours, 15 monethes, azenst the kyng of Mancy, that helde werre azenst him. And the cause was, for we hadden gret lust to see his noblesse and the estat of his court and alle his governance, to wite zif it were suche, as wee herde seye that it was. And treuly, we fond it more noble and more excellent and ricchere and more marveyllous, than ever we herde speke offe; in so moche, that we wolde never han leved it, had wee not seen it.”—*The Voiage and Travaile*, &c. pp. 263–4.

I have already deduced, from a comparison of the accounts transmitted to us by various authors, that the Chinese wall must have been built very soon after the year of our era 1420; and I shall now add a few observations tending to corroborate and sustain that conclusion. At the epoch just pointed out, the Chinese had but recently got rid of a foreign government; in which posture of affairs they may very naturally be supposed to have been apprehensive of the return of their late masters, and anxious to prevent a renewed visit from such troublesome neighbours. But, upon the extinction of the first Tartar dynasty, all

close connexion ceased with the countries to the west of China ; while the dangers and difficulties to be encountered on the intermediate roads (of which some notion may be formed, from the extracts that have been given from the journal of Kogia Gaiats Eddin), and the jealousy in which the restored native Chinese government indulged against strangers, contributed still further to interrupt the intercourse between the Celestial Empire and the rest of the continent of Asia. This combination of circumstances is quite sufficient to account for the obscurity in which the original construction of the great wall is involved, and for the fact of no notice having been taken of it by any foreign author, while the work was going on, or till near eighty years after its completion. The absurd practice too of the Board of History, of deferring to publish the transactions of a dynasty till its termination, may have afforded a pretext for withholding a formal official account of this structure from the Chinese public, till the time of building it was forgotten : and, possibly, the desire of accelerating this result, may have been one of the motives which gave rise to the regulation in question. Upon the representation of the case here advanced, the Chinese wall was nearly a hundred and eighty years old when the Jesuits first saw it ;—a space of time fully long enough to produce, in a mound of such materials and construction, the appearance of great antiquity which it had acquired before it came under their inspection.

The negative part of the argument which has, in the foregoing pages, been submitted to the reader, concerning the age of the Chinese wall, may in like manner be urged against the early use in China of either gunpowder, the mariner's compass, or printing. But it is unnecessary here to go over the same ground again in detail ; and I shall, therefore, confine myself chiefly to the silence of Marco Polo with regard to those inventions ; which, considered even alone, bears most forcibly against the supposition of the Chinese having had the benefit of any of them so long ago as his time. They were, all of them, unknown in Europe, when he set out from Venice ; and there is,

I will venture to assert, no object of curiosity which could have more astonished this inquisitive traveller, or which would have more naturally been enrolled by him among his *Meravegliose cose del mondo*, than the three acquisitions of human ingenuity, severally considered, which have been just specified.

Should it occur to the mind, that our author being employed only in the civil service of the Chinese emperor, may possibly not have had an opportunity of seeing firearms or explosions of gunpowder, it is to be recollected that he was for seventeen years in almost uninterrupted attendance on the person of the sovereign; during which time he must have been frequently present at reviews of the troops, besides having constantly before his eyes the soldiers upon guard at the palace. But, even granting for a moment this mode of accounting for silence upon the subject to be valid with respect to Marco, surely it cannot at all apply to the case of Sir John Maundevile, who, as we have already seen stated by himself, served in the army of the Celestial Empire for fifteen months in time of war; and who certainly would have been quite as much surprised as his Venetian predecessor could have been, at the effects of gunpowder; as he left Europe in the year 1322, just about the period of its invention by Schwartz, but before it was turned to any warlike use. With Sir John's silence upon the point is to be combined the circumstance, that there are passages in his account of China, in which he could not have avoided the mention of this combustible and its application to military purposes, if it was known, and such application made of it, in that country in his day. The following, for instance, is his description of the arms and accoutrements of the Sino-Tartar soldiery, together with some allusion to their mode of besieging fortified towns and castles. "And whan thei werren, thei werren fulle wisely, and alle weys don here besynes, to destroyen hire enemyes. Every man there berethe 2 bowes or 3, and of arwes gret plentee, and a gret ax. And the gentyles han schorte speres and large, and fulle trenchant on that o syde: and thei han

plates and helmes made of quyrboylle;^a and hire hors cover-toures of the same. And who so fleethe fro the bataylle, thei sle him. And whan thei holden ony sege abouten castelle or toun that is walled and defensable, thei behoten to hem that ben with inne, to don alle the profite and gode, that it is marveylle to here: and thei graunten also to hem that ben with inne, alle that thei wille asken hem. And afre that thei ben zolden, anon thei sleen hem alle, and kutten of hire eres, and sowcen hem in vynegre, and there of thei maken gret servyse for Lordes.”—*The Voiage and Travaile, &c.* p. 303. Whatever difficulty the reader may find in determining the exact meaning of some parts of this passage, he can have none whatever in perceiving, that there is no mention in it of the employment of either firelocks by the soldiers, or cannon in the siege or defence of fortified places. I do not see how omissions in evidence could be more strongly brought to bear against the use of gunpowder in China, till after the departure thence of our author.

But the Travels of Marco Polo enable us to carry the proof of this point farther: as they contain an anecdote which furnishes, by implication, his positive evidence upon the subject. In the sixty-second chapter of his second book he relates the circumstance of certain machines for projecting stones of great weight, having been constructed under the superintendence of his father and uncle, by means of which the troops of the Em-

^a *Leather studded with bosses*; as may be concluded from the expression used in this place, in a Latin copy of the work referred to in the edition I quote from; viz. *corio bullato*, from which the English word appears to have been formed by contraction. Sir John wrote his narrative in three languages, as he himself tells us in the following passage:—“And zee schulle undirstonde, that I have put this boke out of Latyn into Frensche, and translated it azen out of Frensche into Englyssche, that every man of my nacioun may undirstonde it. But Lordes and Knyghtes and othere noble and worthi men, that conne Latyn but litylle, and han ben bezonde the see, knowen and undirstonden, zif I erre in devisynge, for forzetynge, or elles; that thei mowe redresse it and amende it.”—*The Voiage and Travaile, &c.* pp. 6–7.

peror Kublaï succeeded in taking a city very strongly fortified, that had previously resisted the attacks of the besiegers for three years; and this account is, in the main, corroborated by the testimony of the Chinese Annals. But it is perfectly obvious that, when such importance could be attached to machines of the description in question, both the besiegers and besieged must have been wholly unacquainted with the use of gunpowder and cannon. The following is the chapter of Marco's narrative to which I refer :

*“ Of the city of Sa-yan-fu, that was taken by the means of
MM. Nicolo and Maffio Polo.*

“ Sa-yan-fu is a considerable city of the province of Manji, having under its jurisdiction twelve wealthy and large towns. It is a place of great commerce and extensive manufactures. The inhabitants burn the bodies of their dead, and are idolaters. They are the subjects of his majesty, and use his paper-currency. Raw-silk is there produced in great quantity, and the finest silks, intermixed with gold, are woven. Game of all kinds abounds. The place is amply furnished with every thing that belongs to a great city; and by its uncommon strength it was enabled to stand a siege of three years, refusing to surrender to the Grand Khan, even after he had obtained possession of the province of Manji. The difficulties experienced in the reduction of it were chiefly occasioned by the army's not being able to approach it, excepting on the northern side; the others being surrounded with water, by means of which the place continually received supplies, which it was not in the power of the besiegers to prevent. When the operations were reported to his majesty, he felt extremely hurt that this place alone should obstinately hold out, after all the rest of the country had been reduced to obedience. The circumstance having come to the knowledge of the brothers Nicolo and Maffio, who were then resident at the imperial court, they immediately presented themselves to the Grand Khan, and proposed to him that they should be allowed to construct machines, such as were made use of in the

West, capable of throwing stones of three hundred pounds' weight, by which the buildings of the city might be destroyed, and the inhabitants killed. Their memorial was attended to by his majesty; and, warmly approving of their scheme, he gave orders that the ablest smiths and carpenters should be placed under their direction; amongst whom were some Nestorian Christians, who proved to be most able mechanics. In a few days they completed three engines, according to the instructions furnished by the two brothers; and, a trial being made of them in the presence of the Grand Khan and of his whole court, an opportunity was afforded of seeing them cast stones, each of which weighed three hundred pounds. They were then put on board of vessels, and conveyed to the army. When set up in front of the city of Sa-yan-fu, the first stone projected by one of them fell with such weight and violence upon a building, that a great part of it was crushed, and fell to the ground. So terrified were the inhabitants by this mischief, which to them seemed to be the effect of a thunderbolt from heaven, that they immediately deliberated upon the expediency of surrendering. Persons authorized to treat were accordingly sent from the place, and their submission was accepted, on the same terms and conditions as had been granted to the rest of the province. This prompt result of their ingenuity increased the reputation and credit of these two Venetian brothers, in the opinion of his majesty and of all his courtiers."—*Marsden's edition*, pp. 488–9.

Sa-yan-fu, omitting the last syllable, which merely denotes the rank of the city, does not much differ from *Siang-yang*, the name given to the same place in the French translation of the Chinese Annals; in which it is represented as having had a fortified suburb, called *Fan-tching*, on the opposite side of the river; and the transaction in question is therein related more in detail as follows: "Comme les villes de Fan-tching et de Siang-yang, que les Mongous attaquaient en même-temps, n'étoient séparées que par la rivière, et se communiquoient au moyen de plusieurs ponts de bateaux que Liu-ouen-hoan y avoit fait construire, elles se prêtoient aisément un secours mutuel et avoient

plus de ressources pour résister aux efforts prodigieux des Mongous. Fan-tien-chun et Niou-fou, qui commandoient dans Fan-tching, s'y défendirent, pendant quatre ans que dura le siège, avec tant d'intelligence et de bravoure, que les Mongous ne purent jamais remporter aucun avantage ; mais Alihaïya, qui venoit des pays Occidentaux, ayant proposé de faire usage d'une nouvelle machine propre à lancer des pierres, les assiégeans s'en servirent si à propos, qu'ils enlevèrent d'abord tous les dehors. Atchou entreprit en même-temps de brûler les ponts de bateaux qui servoient de communication aux deux villes, et sa tentative fut bientôt couronnée par le plus heureux succès. Fan-tching désespérant alors de recevoir aucun secours de Siang-yang, se vit hors d'état de soutenir comme auparavant les efforts des Mongous, lesquels, de leur côté, par l'espérance d'emporter enfin la place par le moyen des machines de Alihaïya, se déterminèrent à donner un assaut général. Il fut donné au commencement de la première lune. Les Mongous montrèrent tant d'ardeur que, malgré la résistance et les efforts prodigieux de courage de la part des assiégés, la ville fut forcée et tomba en leur pouvoir ; La prise de Fan-tching qui venoit de coûter si cher aux Mongous, ne les pouvoit consoler des pertes qu'elle leur avoit fait essuyer, que par l'espérance de devenir bientôt maîtres de Siang-yang. Après qu'ils se furent remis quelque temps de leur fatigue, Alihaïya fit transporter ses machines de guerre sur la partie des murailles de Fan-tching, qui regardoit Sian-yang, et il disposa toutes choses pour la battre en brèche avec tout l'avantage qu'il pouvoit tirer de sa position. A la dixième lune, l'attaque commença par les nouvelles machines de Alihaïya, qui donnèrent contre les tours de la ville, avec un bruit de tonnerre si épouvantable, que les habitans saisis de frayeur et les troupes même qui gardoient les murailles ayant quitté d'abord leur poste et redescendu dans la ville, un grand nombre des assiégés cherchèrent leur salut dans une prompte désertion. Liu-ouen-hoan, qui avoit défendu si long-temps la place, vit dès-lors qu'il ne lui seroit pas possible de tenir, A la deuxième lune, il commença par envoyer les chefs de la

ville aux généraux, et se rendit ensuite lui-même à leur camp. Ayant bientôt après introduit les Mongous dans la place, —” *His. Gen. de la Chine*, tom. ix. pp. 328–33.

If the accounts which have been just brought together be compared, it will be seen that they perfectly agree upon the point which is material to the present inquiry; namely, the decisive efficacy of the balistæ, or projecting machines, on the occasion referred to;—an efficacy which they could have had, only upon the supposition of the conflicting parties having been quite ignorant of the use of gunpowder. Neither, as I conceive, is the force of this agreement in the main between the two statements, much weakened by discrepancies in other respects, which can be easily accounted for. Upon the difference, as to the persons under whose direction the machines were constructed, M. Des Hautesrayes makes the following observation: “Les trois Vénetiens^a employèrent des charpentiers Chrétiens à la construction de ces machines. L’histoire Chinoise rapporte en effet qu’un seigneur *Igour*, appelé Alihaïya, un des officiers-généraux qui commandoit au siège de Siang-yang et avoit une grande connoissance des pays d’Occident, proposa à Houpilaïhan, dont il étoit personnellement connu, de faire venir plusieurs machinistes occidentaux qui avoient l’art de lancer des pierres de cent cinquante livres . . . il faut supposer que Marco-Polo, dont il n’est point parlé dans tout ceci, connoissoit ces machinistes, et qu’il parla d’eux au général Alihaïya. *Editeur*.”—*His. Gen. de la Chine*, tom. ix. note à p. 329. Whether the discrepancy in question can be thus removed, is of very little consequence to determine; Chinese history allows the credit of producing the machines to one or more individuals *that came from the West*; and that it should, upon this point, so far agree with the narrative of the Venetian author, is, I think, as

^a In some of the editions of the Travels of Marco, he is represented as having assisted his father and uncle in superintending the formation of the machines in question; and it appears to have been a copy of one of those editions which came under the inspection of M. Des Hautesrayes.

much as could be expected, considering the gross ignorance of the Chinese with respect to distant countries, their contempt for strangers, and their inability to express foreign names with correctness. Another difference to be remarked between the two accounts is that, while that of our traveller assigns only three years to the siege of Siang-yang, and states that it surrendered immediately after the first discharge of the balistæ, the Chinese one extends the duration of this siege to five years, and admits not the capitulation of the besieged till two months after those machines had been brought to bear against them, nor, of course, till after they had performed prodigious feats of valour, which, however, I have not detained the reader with recounting. Here there is even still less room than before for questioning on which side the truth lies; as Marco Polo could have no possible motive for misrepresenting the real state of the case with respect to the points just noticed: so that the circumstance of the Chinese literati differing from him on those points must be looked on as an instance of their indulging in exaggeration and fiction, even in a part of their history in which misstatements are liable to detection, by being put to the test of a comparison with the accounts of foreign writers.

A further instance of the inattention of the mandarins to truth, is exhibited in their mode of dealing in their narrative with the above-mentioned balistæ. It is quite plain that those balistæ were introduced into China for the first time at the siege of Siang-yang, not only from the testimony of the Venetian traveller, but also from that of the Chinese themselves, as given in the foregoing extracts from the French translation of their *Annals*; in which the machines in question are expressly called *new*, and are stated to have produced, in the minds of the besieged, a degree of astonishment and consternation that can be attributed solely to their never having before seen any such engines made use of. But, notwithstanding this, the same machines are recorded in Chinese history, as employed on some previous occasions, evidently with a view to fill up the space

through which that history is extended backward beyond its true length.

The most curious point, however, with regard to those engines of war, is the contrivance of the French missionaries, in describing their effects in a way that would lead an unwary reader to suppose they were cannon: so that a subject which tells very decidedly against the early use of gunpowder in China, is, by their mode of treating it, actually converted into apparent ground for an argument on the opposite side of the question. Something of this management, which the extreme vagueness and obscurity of the Chinese style afforded an opportunity of resorting to, may be perceived in the account of the matter above quoted from P. de Mailla's translation. He could not, indeed, in the case there referred to, call the *balistæ* cannon: the testimony of Marco Polo about them in that case was too direct to admit of his venturing to do so. But in the previous instances of their being mentioned in the Annals, he at first did not feel the same scruple; though, afterwards, he found that he had, in consequence, committed himself beyond what prudence would warrant, and wrote home to Europe to have his translation in this respect corrected. The following is an extract from one of the letters prefixed to his work: the name of the friend to whom he addressed it, is not stated:

“Ainsi si vous avez reçu les corrections que je vous ai envoyées, il sera bon de les suivre, s'il n'y a point d'ailleurs quelque inconvénient; s'il y a quelque embarras, vous pouvez les laisser.

“Il n'en est pas de même d'une machine de guerre dont il est parlé sous la dynastie des TANG et à laquelle j'ai donné le nom de *canon*, parce qu'elle est désignée par le même nom dont les Chinois se servent aujourd'hui pour signifier les canons, quoique le caractère soit un peu différent; mais comme il y a lieu de douter que ces machines à jeter de grosses pierres fussent véritablement ce que nous appelons canon, il me semble qu'il ne faut point se servir de ce nom, et lui en substituer un plus général, comme je l'ai fait ailleurs en parlant des guerres

des *Kin* et des *Yuen* ; je vous prie d'y faire attention."—*Lettre VI.* p. clxxviii.

M. Des Hautesrayes, in a note upon part of the text of the French translation in which the required correction had been made, gives the following analysis of the meaning of the Chinese character alluded to : " Ni le P. Gaubil ni le P. de Mailla n'ont osé traduire le *Ho-pao* par le *canon*. En effet le caractère *Pao* est formé de l'assemblage de deux autres caractères dont l'un signifie *pierre*, et l'autre *qui enveloppe, qui contient* ; leur réunion ne présente guère que l'idée d'une *baliste* ou machine à lancer des pierres, telle que celle que nos écrivains du bas empire appelloient *mangoneau* et *perrier* ou *pierrier*. Il est à remarquer cependant, que les Chinois se servent encore aujourd'hui de ce mot *Pao* pour signifier le canon. *Editeur*."—*Hist. Gen. de la Chine*, tom. ix. note à p. 166. There is a little ambiguity in the last sentence of this note, which it is necessary to point out, in order to guard against misapprehension of the subject. The expression " le mot *Pao*," in its common acceptation, means either the *word*, or the *character* *Pao* ; but here applies, with truth, only to the word. Now that the Chinese should at present call cannon by the same name as that which they formerly gave to *balistæ*, is no way surprising, when the extreme paucity of words in their language is taken into consideration. But, that the two implements of war are not denoted by exactly the same character in their writing, is admitted by P. de Mailla, in the foregoing extract from one of his letters ; and it is well known that Chinese characters having the slightest difference in shape, may be totally different in signification.

It being now perfectly manifest from the learned Jesuit's own admission, as well as from the explanatory note of his commentator, that the *Pao*, or *Ho-pao*, described by him, were not cannon, let us look to his translation of the passage in the *Annals* where they are mentioned next before the siege of Siang-yang ; namely, at that of Caï-fong-fu, which is stated to have taken place forty years earlier. His words at the place in

question are as follow:—"Il y avoit alors à Cai-fong-fou des *Ho-pao* ou *Pao à feu* appellés *Tchin-tien-leï*, dans lesquels on mettoit de la poudre, qui prenant feu éclatoit comme un coup de tonnerre et se faisoit entendre à plus de cent *ly* [that is, above ten miles off!]; son effet s'étendoit à un demi-arpent de terre tout autour du lieu où il éclatoit, et il n'y avoit aucune cuirasse, de quelque bon fer qu'elle fût, qu'il ne brisât."—*Hist. Gen. de la Chine*, tom. ix. pp. 166–7. Here our author, availing himself of an obscurity in the Chinese passage which it is impossible to clear up, actually represents the *Pao* as having gunpowder put into them, and thus directly converts them into cannon; whereas all that can be collected from the original sentence, on the nearest approximation that can be made to its general purport, and on the supposition for a moment of its truth, is that the projectiles discharged from the *balistæ* mentioned in it, were either formed of some combustible matter, or heated in the fire; the Chinese authors, in their boasting manner, attributing most terrific effects to the use of those machines, and forgetting that they were registered in the same Annals as used for the first time, and in a simpler manner, on an occasion that did not arise till forty years after.

Unfortunately for the credit of P. de Mailla's translation of the passage in question, it is rendered quite differently by P. Gaubil, who was just as good a Chinese scholar, and just as anxious to establish the great age of the Chinese artillery. What the former thinks powder, appears ball^a to the latter;—a hollow ball, however, into which he claps powder, thus transforming it into a bomb, and presenting to us the absurd chimera of a mere *balista* employed to project the bombs of a mortar;^b just as if the Chinese could find out the use of gun-

^a This indescribable offspring of P. Gaubil's imagination cannot in strictness be termed a ball, as the shape he assigned to it is not that of a sphere, but of a cupping-glass! I have ventured to call it a ball, for want of a better name for it.

^b Our author appears to have been in some degree conscious of the incon-

powder in the explosion of those balls, without perceiving the simpler and more obvious application of its force to their projection. He acknowledges, however, that no mention occurs in the Chinese Annals of the employment of artillery at any siege before the one here related; and endeavours to reconcile this fact with the confident assertion of the Chinese, that they understood the use of gunpowder for above sixteen hundred years before his time, by one or other of two suppositions that are as futile as can well be imagined. First, he imagines that they may have at one time forgotten how to make use of cannon; but, surely, if they ever forget the method, they must have previously known it; and, then, according to this fanciful notion of our author, combined with the perfection he attributes to their history, we ought to find frequent mention of Chinese artillery at the sieges recorded in the more ancient part of that history. Secondly, he conceives that this invention may have been made by some private individuals; and that, therefore, forsooth, the Chinese government would not avail themselves of the important advantages which it obviously placed within their reach! I have not seen the work of P. Gaubil in which those whimsical positions are hazarded; but they are quoted by M. Des Hautesrayes, in the following note of his upon P. de Mailla's representation of the same subject:—"Le P. Gaubil, pag. 72, a traduit cet endroit: 'Dans ce temps-là on avoit dans la ville des *Pao à feu* qui jettoient des pièces de fer en forme de ventouse; cette ventouse étoit remplie de poudre.' Il avertit qu'il n'a pas osé mettre le mot de bombe: 'Il est certain,' ajoute-t-il, 'que les Chinois ont l'usage de la poudre depuis plus de seize cents ans, &c. &c. Jusqu'à ce temps-ci on ne voit pas trop l'usage qu'ils en faisoient dans les sièges. Il pourroit se faire que les Chinois aient quelquefois perdu l'art de servir l'artillerie, ou peut-être les boulets et les ventouses dont il est

gruity of the ingredients which he thus attempted to bring together, by his declining to give to his curious pieces of iron the name of bomb, though he virtually depicts them as such.

parlé, n'étoient que de l'invention de quelques particuliers qui ne passoit pas à d'autres.' Le passage en Chinois est difficile à entendre, et j'en tire la preuve de la différence remarquable qui règne entre les versions de ces deux missionnaires, quoique l'un et l'autre fussent très-habiles dans la langue Chinoise ; car je crois pouvoir supposer que c'est le même passage qu'ils avoient sous les yeux. Le texte Chinois porte : Té-yeou *Ho-pao*, ming tchin-tien-leï tché, yong tié koan tching yo, y ho tien tchi, pao ki ho fa, ki ching ju leï ouen. La grande difficulté tombe sur les mots, yong tié koan tching yo, dans lesquels l'un trouve *la poudre à canon*, et l'autre *des pièces de fer en forme de ventouse* ; mais quelle idée présentent ces dernières paroles ? *Editeur.*"—*Hist. Gen. de la Chine*, tom. ix. note à p. 166. But although the two Jesuits differ as to the meaning of the original passage here described,—and differ to such an extent as to show that the part of it on which their reasoning depends, is absolutely unintelligible,—they yet are quite agreed as to the completeness of the proof this part affords, of gunpowder having been used at the siege of Caï-fong-fu in 1232 ; and while one of them acknowledges that he could not find in the Chinese Annals any earlier statement bearing upon the subject, the other makes an admission substantially to the same effect. He, however, adds that there is verbal, though not written authority, for the employment of the powder in question in China, as far back as the first century of our era ; and that some of the Chinese claim for it a still greater age. Of course they do ; and, if they had become acquainted with the nature of this powerful chemical agent, before their Annals were published in their present form, we, no doubt, should find described in them the full particulars of its invention at least three or four thousand years ago. The admission of P. de Mailla comes immediately after a passage already quoted from one of his letters, and is expressed in the following terms : " Je n'ai encore pu trouver quand les Chinois ont commencé à se servir de la poudre à canon. La tradition porte qu'ils en avoient l'usage dès le commencement du premier siècle de l'ère-chrétienne ; quelques-uns même prétendent qu'ils

s'en servoient avant ; mais cela me paroît trop incertain pour oser l'assurer."—*Lettre VI.* p. clxxviii.

That the reverend fathers should have ventured on the manœuvre which has been just exposed, is the more surprising, because an older member of their order, P. du Halde—who wrote before this mode of sustaining Chinese pretensions had been thought of, and whose treatise upon China they can hardly be supposed not to have seen,—has actually given the history of the introduction of cannon by the Portuguese into the Celestial Empire, in such a manner as to show clearly that the Chinese, when receiving this gift, were utterly ignorant of the nature and management of ordnance ; whence, notwithstanding the contrary suggestion of the learned author, it may, I submit, be fairly inferred, that at no previous time could they have had any knowledge whatever of the subject. He indeed endeavours to defeat this inference, by telling us that the Chinese had lost the use they formerly made of balistæ. The cases, however, which he thus implicitly compares, are not at all analogous : it is very possible that a people who had imperfectly learned from strangers the construction of balistæ, might afterwards forget the method of regulating the machinery, and repairing it when out of order, in which way those engines would become useless to them ; and, in like manner, if they were deprived of the means of compounding, or otherwise procuring powder for their artillery, they could no longer avail themselves of the service of that artillery. But what P. du Halde suggests (in which he is followed by P. Gaubil), is, that, while the Chinese retained completely the use of gunpowder, they may have altogether lost that of guns ;—a position which is evidently quite untenable. Even our author himself supplies ground for the refutation of his own suggestion ; since, although insisting as confidently as any of his juniors on the great age of Chinese gunpowder, he admits that it was not till recently employed for any purpose except that of affording amusement by exhibitions of fireworks, and that the acquisition of ordnance in China was only of modern date. Here again, it may be noticed, he is at variance

with himself; for men who had invented the combustible in question, could not long fail to discover its application to more important uses than the mere transient gratification of the sight: and it was probably the observation of this inconsistency of his, that induced the later writers to go the whole length of maintaining the antiquity of the cannon, as well as of the gunpowder of the Chinese. Setting aside, then, his reasoning, and confining our attention to his facts, we shall find the following statement to have some bearing on the point under discussion.

“ Quoique l’usage de la poudre soit ancien à la Chine, l’artillerie y est assez moderne; et l’on ne s’est gueres servi de la poudre depuis son invention, que pour les feux d’artifice, en quoi les Chinois excellent. Il y avoit cependant trois ou quatre bombardes courtes et renforcées aux portes de Nan-king, assez anciennes pour faire juger, qu’ils ont eu quelque connoissance de l’artillerie; ils paroissoient cependant en ignorer l’usage, et elles ne servoient là, qu’à être montrées comme des pièces curieuses. Ils avoient aussi quelques pierriers sur leurs bâtimens de marine, mais ils manquoient d’adresse pour s’en servir. Ce fut en l’année 1621, que la ville de Macao fit présent a l’Empereur [He-tsong, the last but one sovereign of the native Chinese race composing the Ming dynasty] de trois pièces de canon, avec des hommes pour les servir: on en fit l’essai dans Peking en présence des mandarins, qui furent d’abord surpris, et ensuite consternez, quand ils virent qu’après avoir tiré une de ces pièces, elle tua en reculant un Portugais et trois Chinois, qui ne se retirèrent pas assez promptement. Ces pièces furent menées sur les frontieres de l’Empire du côté des Tartares, qui étant venus en troupes auprès de la grande muraille, furent tellement épouvantez du ravage qu’elles firent, quand on les eût tiré sur eux, qu’ils prirent la fuite, et n’oserent plus en approcher.”—*Description de l’Empire de la Chine, &c.*, tom. ii. p. 47. With regard to the three or four mortars of unknown age which are here stated to have been placed at the gates of Nan-king before 1621, it is not fair to assume that they were then very old, and thence to infer that the Chinese must have

had some skill in the use of artillery in ancient times. It would, as I conceive, be more natural to deduce from their acknowledged ignorance of the subject in 1621, that they never previously had any acquaintance with it; and that, therefore, the guns alluded to were not their workmanship, but that of foreigners, and, consequently, of Europeans. That they should have got possession of those guns, without being at the same time taught their use, may be easily conceived to have happened in various ways; but as the precise mode in which this actually occurred, can now no longer be ascertained, so neither is it material to the question before us to have it determined. Throughout the entire passage the author betrays great want of candour; but still he has allowed in it more of the real state of the case to transpire, than it was consistent with the views of subsequent writers to communicate to the public; and, accordingly, there is not, in the historic work of P. de Mailla, the slightest allusion to any of the circumstances here recorded.

The following account, by P. du Halde, of the way in which the Chinese attained to the art of founding cannon, bears more plainly and unequivocally upon the subject of our inquiry:—
“ Dans la suite les divers ouvrages d’optique, de statique, d’architecture tant militaire que civile, et divers instrumens de bois et de cuivre, que le Pere Ferdinand Verbiest avoit fait faire pour l’observatoire de Peking, persuaderent aux mandarins, qu’il ne seroit pas moins habile à fondre des canons, pour défendre l’Empire des insultes de ses ennemis, et en particulier de certains voleurs qui infestoient les côtes de la Chine et les provinces frontieres, dont on avoit beaucoup de peine à les chasser. C’est pourquoi ils présenterent à l’Empereur [Kang-he, the second sovereign of the present Tartar dynasty] un mémoire, par lequel ils le supplioient d’ordonner au Pere Verbiest, pour la conservation de l’Etat, d’instruire des ouvriers de la maniere de fondre et de fabriquer des canons. Le Missionnaire, qui avoit lû dans les archives de l’Eglise de Peking, que sous la derniere famille des empereurs chinois, on s’étoit servi de ce moyen, pour introduire dans l’Empire un grand nombre

d'ouvriers evangeliques,^a crut que ce service, qu'il rendroit à un si grande prince, ne manqueroit pas de le rendre favorable à la religion chrétienne. Il fit fondre 130 canons avec un succès admirable.

“ Quelque tems après, le conseil des premiers mandarins de guerre, présenta un mémoire à l'Empereur, pour lui faire connoître la nécessité où ils étoient d'avoir, pour la défense de leurs places, 320 pièces de canon de calibres différens, à la façon de ceux d'Europe. L'Empereur répondit à cette requête, en ordonnant qu'on travaillât à la fonte de ces canons, et que *Nan-hoai-gin* (c'étoit le nom chinois du Pere Verbiest) présidât à ce travail, mais qu'auparavant il lui présentât un mémorial, où fussent peintes les figures et les modeles des canons qu'il feroit fondre. Le Pere obéit à l'ordre de l'Empereur, et le 11. Février de l'année 1681, il présenta ces modeles; ils furent agréés, et l'ordre fut donné au tribunal qui a l'intendance des bâtimens et des ouvrages publics, d'y faire travailler incessamment, et de fournir pour cet effet toutes les choses necessaires.

^a By combining this account with that contained in the passage previously quoted from P. du Halde, the time during which the workmen alluded to could have been introduced into China, is restricted within very narrow limits; namely, between 1621, before which year the Chinese had no acquaintance whatever with the use of cannon, and 1644, when the Ming dynasty came to an end. It is not stated by our author that those workmen were allowed to carry their operations so far as actually to have produced cannon; nor, considering the great jealousy entertained against foreigners by the last native Chinese dynasty, is it very likely that they were: and allusion appears to be here made to them, principally with a view to justify by their example the conduct of P. Verbiest, in teaching a Pagan nation the means of acquiring ordnance;—a proceeding which had been repeatedly prohibited by Popes, and for which, in consequence, this missionary had incurred the censure of many of his own religion. The circumstance is told by P. du Halde as follows:—“ Quelques personnes dont le zèle est très-ardent, quand ils croient pouvoir rendre odieux les Jesuites, publierent en Espagne, et en Italie, des libelles contre le Pere Verbiest, où ils disoient qu'il étoit indigne d'un prêtre et d'un religieux, de porter des armes aux infidèles, et que ce Pere avoit encouru les excommunications des Papes qui l'ont défendu.”—*Description de l'Empire de la Chine, &c.*, tom. ii. p. 49.

On employa plus d'un an à la fabrique de ces canons.
Quand tous ces canons furent achevez, on les conduisit, pour en faire l'essai, au pied des montagnes qui sont vers l'occident, à une demie journée de la ville de Peking. Plusieurs mandarins s'y rendirent pour les voir tirer; et l'Empereur ayant appris le succès de cette épreuve, y alla lui-même, avec quelques gouverneurs de la Tartarie occidentale qui se trouverent à Peking: il y conduisit toute sa cour, et les principaux officiers de ses milices: on les chargea en sa présence, et on les tira plusieurs fois contre certains endroits qu'il avoit désignez.

“ Ayant vu que les boulets ne manquoient jamais d'y porter, par le soin que prenoit le Pere de les dresser avec ses instrumens, il en eut tant de joye, qu'il fit sous des tentes et au milieu de la compagnie, un festin solennel aux gouverneurs tartares, et à ses principaux officiers de guerre: il but dans sa coupe d'or à la santé de son beau-pere, de ses officiers, et même de ceux qui avoient pointé le canon d'une maniere si juste. Enfin s'adressant au Pere Verbiest, qu'il avoit fait loger auprès de sa tente, et qu'il fit appeller en sa présence, il lui dit: ‘ Les canons que vous nous fîtes faire l'an passé, nous ont fort bien servi contre les rebelles, dans les provinces de Chen-si, de Hou-quang, et de Kiang-si: je suis fort content de vos services;’ et alors se dépouillant de sa veste fourrée de martres d'un grand prix, et de sa robe de dessous, il les lui donna comme un témoignage de son amitié.

“ On continua durant plusieurs jours l'essai des canons, et l'on tira vingt-trois mille boulets, avec une grande satisfaction des mandarins, qui les faisoient servir par leurs officiers. Ce fut en ce tems-là, que le Pere composa un traité de la fonte des canons et de leur usage, et le présenta à l'Empereur, avec 44 tables des figures nécessaires à l'intelligence de cet art, et des instrumens propres à pointer les canons, pour les tirer où l'on veut.”—*Description de l'Empire de la Chine, &c.*, tom. ii. pp. 47-9.

P. de Mailla has altogether omitted the particulars contained in this account, as well as those related in the former

extract. This suppression of facts so directly connected with his subject, and with which he must have been perfectly familiar, is a tacit admission, on his part, of the weakness of the reasoning by which the older author attempted to reconcile those facts with the boastful claims of the mandarins. The use of mortars and other large guns soon followed the invention of gunpowder in Europe, and would, in all probability, have equally done so in China, had a similar compound been really invented in ancient times in that country. But, from the two extracts which have been just submitted to the reader, it plainly appears that the Chinese had no conception whatever of the management of cannon before 1621, or of the mode of casting them till after 1681.

Small guns came somewhat earlier into the possession of this people. Mendoza, in his history of the transactions that occurred at the commencement of the intercourse between the Spaniards and the Chinese, when describing an attack made in the year 1574 by pirates of the latter nation upon Manilla, mentions that two hundred of the assailants were armed with matchlocks; and, from the manner in which this is incidentally stated by him, it would appear that those weapons, and the powder on which their efficacy depends, were then no novelty to the Chinese.^a It is, I conceive, very possible, though I

^a The following account is extracted from a translation, by Joachim Brulius, of the historic work of Mendoza:—"Limahon [the commander of the pirates] quippe res necessarias abundanter suâ classe vehens, ideoque neque deflectere in terram, neque ventos negligere coactus, rectâ navigatione præfectum [Salzedo, a Spanish officer] prævenit ad finitima Manilæ, pridie S. Andreæ anno 1574; ac æstimans præcipuam suam ex festinatione felicitatem, utendumque noctis obscuritatem ratus, selectos ex omnibus quadringentos milites lembis impositos, in terram exscendere et invadere civitatem Manilam, antequam illucesceret imparatam, illi ignem injicere trucidatis civibus jussit, ipse summo mane cum reliquis copiis suppetias, si necesse esset, laturus adesset. Chinenses quadringenti totâ nocte cum ventis luctati, ipsâ S. Andreæ festivitate horâ matutinâ octavâ, ad litus lembos adducunt uno à civitate miliari remotum, religatisque ibi navibus, velut aciem instruunt, præcedentibus sclopetariis ducentis, lanceariis pari numero sequentibus."—*Historia Magni Regni Chinensis*, Pars II. lib. i. pp. 13-14.

have not met with any express evidence of the fact, that they may have been acquainted with the use of gunpowder before the arrival of the Portuguese at Canton; but, supposing that they were, this circumstance would afford no ground for their claim to the credit of its invention; as it might have been previously brought to them by the Arabians, who in those days trafficked with the Venetian merchants at Alexandria in Egypt, and were the great trade-carriers thence eastward as far even as China. Firearms, indeed, which had given to Europeans such an immense advantage over Musalman forces, and of which Popes had forbidden the sale to any but Christians, are the commodities which the Venetians would have been slowest to part with in barter to those Arab traders; but their scruples, in this respect, were overcome fully time enough to account for the occurrence of the events alluded to in the order here assigned to them. From their jealousy of the Portuguese, who had then recently discovered the passage to the East round the Cape of Good Hope, and were beginning to supplant them in their Indian trade, they were induced actually to aid the Mohammedan ruler of Egypt against those rivals, with a supply for his ships of war, of gunners,^a guns, and gunpowder, in 1505, that is, twelve years before any Portuguese fleet reached the shores of China. This curious piece of Venetian history is communicated by M. de La Clede as follows:—"Telle étoit une partie des habitans des Indes [the author had been just before giving

^a From the Venetians finding it necessary to send the Egyptian Sultan not only cannon, but also cannoneers, it would appear that their Mohammedan friends were then as yet not habituated to the use of firearms. And that the Indians had never seen the blaze of gunpowder before the year 1501, is evident from the consternation into which the inhabitants of Calicut were thrown by the bombardment of their town that year by Vasco de Gama. The impression which this mode of attack made upon their minds, is thus described by M. de La Clede:—"Zamorin [the king of Calicut] épouvanté, se sauva à Pandarane, pour se mettre à couvert du canon. . . . La consternation fut si grande à Calicut, que le Roi lui-même en prit le deuil, ce qu'il ne faisoit que dans les grandes calamités."—*Hist. Gen. de Portugal*, tom. i. p. 572.

an account of the Nestorian Christians whom the Portuguese found in that country], où Emmanuel envoya François d'Almeyda en qualité de Viceroy. Campson Sultan d'Egypte, jaloux des progrès que les Portugais y faisoient, résolut de se liguier avec le roi de Calicut et de Cambaye, pour les exterminer. Les Venitiens au desespoir de se voir enlever le commerce des epiceries, et des autres marchandises précieuses des Indes, qui leur rapportoient des profits considérables, animoient sous main le Soudan, en lui représentant que ses revenus diminueroient de la moitié, et que le commerce de l'Egypte seroit absolument ruiné, s'il ne chassoit les Portugais des Indes. Alors le Soudan fit équiper dans le Port de Suez une flotte de six galeres, d'un gros galion, et de quatre autres bâtimens de charge, sur lesquels il fit embarquer huit cens Mammelus : c'est ainsi que s'appelloient ces troupes autrefois si belliqueuses, et qui faisoient la principale force des Soudans d'Egypte. Elles n'étoient composées que d'enfans de tribut, qu'on exerçoit avec grand soin dans toutes les fonctions militaires. Tandis que le Soudan étoit occupé à faire équiper la flotte, *dont les Venetiens avoient fourni le bois, l'artillerie et les canoniers ;*—*Hist. Gen. de Portugal*, tom. i. pp. 578–9. It is evident that the motives by which the Venetians were actuated on this occasion, would have rendered them equally willing to furnish with firearms and ammunition the Indian states that were then endeavouring to preserve their independence ; and who, on their part, would naturally have been most anxious for a supply of stores of this kind, the use of which they had experienced to be so formidable and effective in the hands of the Portuguese. There is, therefore, no article of trade for which the Arab merchants would have found a more ready sale, or which they are more likely to have carried with them, about this period, to eastern nations, than gunpowder ; which may thus be easily conceived to have made its way to China before 1517, the very first year that a European ship ever entered a Chinese harbour. Upon the supposition of the Chinese having got gunpowder so early, it would appear that they analyzed its ingredients without European aid, and formed

themselves a compound of the same nature, though of a very inferior description; and this is the utmost extent to which they can be entitled to any credit upon the subject.

Under this head I have only further to notice the very inferior construction of the firearms of the Chinese, and the extremely unskilful use they make of them;—points which tell strongly against the supposition of their having ever invented such weapons, and particularly against their having done so at any very remote period. Their artillery, it is notorious, is of the very worst description, and served in the worst manner; and so little do they know of the efficacy of smaller firearms, that, even to this day, they give a preference to bows and arrows. Their cavalry and the best soldiers in their infantry are still provided chiefly with the bow;^a while their handguns are still only matchlocks, discharged by means of the clumsy aid of a lighted match;^b and are not in the least degree better than those the Venetians made use of in the latter part of the fifteenth century.^c I should add, that the same observation,

^a “On most occasions,” Captain Parish observes, “the cavalry carry bows, which appear to be the weapon held highest in estimation. . . . Both Chinese and Tartars value themselves on their skill in the use of this weapon.”—*Authentic Account of Embassy to China, &c.* vol. ii. pp. 453-4.

^b In the following description, by Captain Parish, of the order in which each of the companies of a body of infantry, consisting of twelve hundred men, were drawn up to receive the Emperor of China, upon an occasion when the author was present, the manner in which the Chinese soldiers are in general armed, is incidentally presented to our view. “The parade of the companies were each as follows :

	The leader, usually a bowman,	
	The standards,	
one sword,	five small colours,	one sword,
and	matchlocks and swordmen,	and
swordmen	in numbers nearly equal,	swordmen
five deep.	five deep.	five deep.”

Authentic Account of Embassy to China, &c. vol. ii. p. 189.

^c The following is the curious description given by an old Venetian historian, Cardinal Bembo, of the matchlock, with his account of the manner in which its use was introduced into Venice, shortly after Cyprus was annexed to

with respect to the quality and management of instruments, holds just in like manner, and bears with like force against Chinese claims of invention, in the instance of the mariner's compass and in that of printing. The Chinese have, indeed, added to the compass several circles and marks connected with their system of astrology, but nothing whatever that indicates the slightest improvement, in either the instrument itself or their mode of employing it, beyond what they may have been taught in each respect by the Arabians in the course of the fifteenth century : and their printing, as shall presently be shown, displays at this moment exactly the same imperfections and the same curious peculiarities, as the art did in Europe in the first rude stage of its invention.

For more special proof against the Chinese employment of

the dominions of that republic. “ Eodem anno [1490], tametsi pacata neque ullo bello implicata esset civitas, rei militaris tamen studium non neglexit. Invaluerat jam in bellis consuetudo, invento Germanorum nobis tradita, ut milites fistulis ferreis uterentur ; quibus fistulis glandes plumbeas magna vi ignis impetu mitterent, atque hostem è longinquo vulnerarent. Eæ erant fistulæ ad formam atque imaginem eorum tormentorum quibus muri oppidorum dejiciuntur, nisi quòd illa ex ære fusili fiunt, maximique sæpe sunt ponderis, ut carris solidissimis ferratisque, ac magno jumentorum numero egeant, quibus sustineri atque regi possint. Fistulæ è ferro sunt ; gestanturque singulis ab militibus singulæ ligneis alligatæ armamentis, per quæ capiuntur, et pulvere ad ignem celeriter comprehendendum idoneo infarciuntur, et, glande immissa, humeris sublatae in hostem convertuntur. Eo telo qui uti scirent, ut reipublicæ suppeterent, peritissimos ejus rei homines undique conquisitos accersitosque Decemviri suas ad urbes miserunt, qui juventutem instituerent ; atque ut agrestes maximè homines id armorum genus docerentur, singulis in vicis pagisque uti duo puberes ei artificio assuefierent edixerunt ; atque iis omnium onerum immunitatem concesserunt, quò studiosiores et diligentiores unum ad id munus obeundum reliquis liberati oneribus ac tributis fierent.”—*Veneta Historia Petri Bembi*, lib. i. pp. 29-30. As the pieces described in this passage are stated to have differed from cannon merely in size, metal, and the addition of a wooden stock to serve for a handle, it is evident that they must have been fired in the same way, and, consequently, were only matchlocks. The Venetians brought cannon into the field, in their wars with the other Italian states, above a hundred years before the period here referred to : so that, in the order of invention, great guns had the precedence ; whereas small ones were those which first came into use among the Chinese.

the magnetic needle at any very remote period, it will be sufficient to advert to the evidence which can be drawn from Marco Polo and the Arabian navigators of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. With respect to my first witness, even his silence on the point goes a considerable way towards establishing my view of the case; for, on the one hand, the Chinese could not have had the benefit of the compass without his knowledge (he having been often sent by the Grand Khan to sea, and entrusted with the command of ships); and, on the other, there was no gift which he could, on his return home, have presented to his native town,—then the first commercial city in the world,—that would have been of greater value to it than this very instrument. But he supplies a great deal more than mere negative ground for my argument; as he not only fails ever to mention the compass, but also positively states circumstances which imply his ignorance of its use. To point this out the more clearly, I shall quote, from the introductory chapter of his first book and some chapters of the third book, part of the account he has given of the voyage in which he finally quitted the shores of China.

“It happened about this period [i. e. after the three Venetians had resided nearly seventeen years at the imperial court, and when the Sino-Tartar emperor had refused them permission to return to their native country], that a queen named Bolgana, the wife of Arghun, sovereign of India,^a died, and as her last

^a This prince reigned over Persia and part of India. From the text it would appear that the Chinese distinguished his kingdom, in our author's time, by the name of the portion of it that was nearest to their own country; or, perhaps, they may have ranked Persia under the general denomination of India, as their knowledge of geography was never very accurate. Arghun was grand-nephew of Kublaï Khan: his lineage and the extent of his dominions are given in the following extracts from the English version, already referred to, of the historic work of M. Petis de la Croix Senior. “In 1265 he [Coublay Can] was informed of the death of his brother Hulacou, who was at that time in Persia; and he immediately took care to instal Abaca Can, the son of Hulacou, in the throne of Persia, Corassana, and India:—” p. 400. “Hulacou Can died in 1265. Abaca Can, his son, succeeded him, and mounted his

request (which she likewise left in a testamentary writing) conjured her husband that no one might succeed to her place on his throne and in his affections, who was not a descendant of her own family, now settled under the dominion of the Grand Khan in the country of Kataia. Desirous of complying with this solemn entreaty, Arghun deputed three of his nobles, discreet men, whose names were Ulatai, Apusca, and Goza, attended by a numerous retinue, as his ambassadors to the Grand Khan, with a request that he might receive at his hands a maiden to wife, from among the relatives of his deceased queen. The application was taken in good part, and under the directions of his majesty, choice was made of a damsel aged seventeen, extremely handsome and accomplished, whose name was Kogatin, and of whom the ambassadors, upon her being shown to them, highly approved. When every thing was arranged for their departure, and a numerous suite of attendants appointed, to do honour to the future consort of king Arghun, they received from the Grand Khan a gracious dismissal, and set out on their return by the way they came. Having travelled for eight months, their further progress was obstructed, and the roads shut up against them, by fresh wars that had broken out amongst the Tartar princes. Much against their inclinations, therefore, they were constrained to adopt the measure of returning to the

throne by order of Coublay Can, his uncle. The second successor was Nicouder, otherwise called Ahmed Can, brother to Abaca. The third, Argoun Can, the son of Abaca Can. He put to death the Grand Vizier Schamseddin Jouini, who had served the state in four reigns, and died himself, after seven years' reign, in 1291."—pp. 402-3. The fleet in which Marco quitted China reached the Persian Gulf in the course of the year 1293; so that his statement, respecting the time of the death of Arghun, is corroborated by the account of the same matter which M. Petis de la Croix derived from various oriental authorities. And that this prince kept up intercourse with the Sino-Tartar emperor, is attested by the elder De Guignes in his history of the Moguls of Persia in the following passage:—"Aussi-tôt qu'Argoun fut parvenu à l'Empire, il envoya demander l'investiture de ses Etats à Kublai, et ne prit le titre de Khan qu'après l'avoir reçu de ce Prince."—*Histoire des Mogols de la Perse*, liv. xvii. p. 265.

court of the Grand Khan, to whom they stated the interruption they had met with.

“ About the time of their reappearance, Marco Polo happened to arrive from a voyage he had made, with a few vessels under his orders, to some parts of the East-Indies, and reported to the Grand Khan the intelligence he brought respecting the countries he had visited, with the circumstances of his own navigation, which, he said, was performed in those seas with the utmost safety. This latter observation having reached the ears of the three ambassadors, who were extremely anxious to return to their own country, from whence they had now been absent three years, they presently sought a conference with our Venetians, whom they found equally desirous of revisiting their home; and it was settled between them that the former, accompanied by their young queen, should obtain an audience of the Grand Khan, and represent to him with what convenience and security they might effect their return by sea to the dominions of their master; whilst the voyage would be attended with less expense than the journey by land, and be performed in a shorter time, according to the experience of Marco Polo, who had lately sailed in those parts. Should his majesty incline to give his consent to their adopting that mode of conveyance, they were then to urge him to suffer the three Europeans, as being persons well skilled in the practice of navigation, to accompany them until they should reach the territory of king Arghun. The Grand Khan, upon receiving this application, showed by his countenance that it was exceedingly displeasing to him, averse as he was to parting with the Venetians. Feeling, nevertheless, that he could not with propriety do otherwise than consent, he yielded to their entreaty. At the same time preparations were made for the equipment of fourteen ships, each having four masts, and capable of being navigated with nine sails,^a the construction and rigging of which would

^a In reference to this passage of the author's narrative, Mr. Barrow (who accompanied Lord Macartney on his embassy to China as private secretary)

admit of ample description, but, to avoid prolixity, it is for the present omitted. Among these vessels there were at least four or five that had crews of two hundred and fifty or two hundred and sixty men. On them were embarked the ambassadors, having the queen under their protection, together with Nicolo, Maffio, and Marco Polo, when they had first taken their leave of the Grand Khan, who presented them with many rubies and other handsome jewels of great value. He also gave directions that the ships should be furnished with stores and provisions for two years."^a—*Marsden's edition*, pp. 27–9.

“After a navigation of about three months, they arrived at an island which lay in a southerly direction, named Java.^b This presented various objects worthy of attention, and notice shall

makes the following observation :—“It is impossible not to consider the notices given by this early traveller as curious, interesting, and valuable ; and, as far as they regard the empire of China, they bear internal evidence of being generally correct. He sailed from China in a fleet consisting of fourteen ships, each carrying four masts, we observed many hundreds of a still larger description, that are employed in foreign voyages, all carrying *four* masts ;—” *Travels in China*, pp. 45–6. With respect to the nine sails, it is right to observe, that there are only four mentioned in the Latin version of the work (in which the words are, “*quarum quælibet quatuor malos atque totidem vela habebat*,” *Muller's edition*, p. 9;) and this is probably the number that was written by Marco, as the Chinese vessels do not, now at least, carry any kind of topsail.

^a In the older of the Arabian accounts of China translated by Renaudot, which was written above four hundred years before the time of Marco Polo, it is stated, that the Chinese were, even at that early period, in the habit of sailing as far as Siraf, on the south-eastern coast of Persia, and that they were prevented from proceeding farther to the west, by the storms and shallows which impeded the navigation of the Persian Gulf and Red Sea. The following is the passage I refer to :—“*La pluspart des vaisseaux chinois font leur charge à Siraf, et ils y embarquent toutes les marchandises qui y sont apportées de Bassora, de Homan, et d'autres lieux. Cela se fait parce que dans cette mer (c'est-à-dire, dans la mer de Perse et dans la mer Rouge), les tempestes sont fort frequentes, et qu'il y a des basses en quelques endroits.*”—*Anciennes Relations des Indes et de la Chine*, p. 10.

^b In the third book, where a more detailed account of this voyage is given, the island in question is called Java minor ; by which name, it is plain from the course taken by the fleet, the author must have meant Sumatra.

be taken of them in the sequel of the work. Taking their departure from thence, they employed eighteen months in the Indian seas, before they were enabled to reach the place of their destination in the territory of king Arghun; and during this part of their voyage also they had an opportunity of observing many things which shall, in like manner, be related hereafter. . . . Upon landing they were informed that king Arghun had died some time before, —" pp. 33-4.

"Kumari [i. e. Cape Comorin] is a province where a part of our northern constellation, invisible at Java, and to within about thirty miles of this place, may be just seen, and where it appears to be the height of a cubit above the horizon."—p. 683.

"Malabar is an extensive kingdom of the Greater India, situated towards the west; concerning which I must not omit to relate some particulars. The people are governed by their own king, who is independent of every other state; and they have their proper language. In this country the north-star is seen about two fathoms above the horizon."—p. 687.

"The kingdom of Guzzerat [Gujerat], which is bounded on the western side by the Indian sea, is governed by its own king, and has its peculiar language. The north-star appears from hence to have six fathoms of altitude."—p. 690.

These extracts suggest the following remarks. In the first place, it is evident from the representation here made, that the Venetian travellers, who certainly did not bring with them from Europe a knowledge of the mariner's compass,^a were yet very superior in nautical skill to the Chinese. In the second place, considering that the ambassadors of Arghun with their charge

^a The polarity of the magnetic needle was known in the thirteenth century, and is described in some writings of that century; but for want of a proper mode of suspending this needle, the use of it was not turned to practical advantage till the year 1302, when Flavio de Gioja, a native of Amalphi, a town in the kingdom of Naples, remedied the defect in question, and applied the instrument, thus improved, to the steerage of vessels at sea; whence he is generally considered as the inventor of the compass.

were sent home, not in merchant vessels, which might be conceived to stop occasionally on the way for the purposes of trade, but in a government fleet that was directed to proceed with the utmost expedition, the great length of two years' time, allowed beforehand for their voyage from China to Persia, and the space of a year and nine months they actually spent in it, wholly exclude the supposition of their conductors having been acquainted with the use of the magnetic needle. In the third place, Marco Polo's ignorance of this needle is still further shown, by the frequent notice he takes of the distance from the horizon at which the north-star, or northern constellation, was to be looked for in different places;^a the finding out of which, in order to the ascertainment of the cardinal points, ceased to be an object of any interest to mariners, after they had got the far more effectual method of steering their course by means of the compass.

To proceed now to the second branch of my argument on this subject;—when, in 1498, Vasco de Gama arrived in the Indian ocean, he found the Musalman pilots there already in possession of the compass; but the name by which they called this instrument was not an Oriental, but an Italian one, clearly marking the Venetian source from which they derived it: and the Arabians continued to give it the same foreign appellation, at all events for some time after the commencement of the last century. Upon this point, Renaudot, in his learned publication of the year 1718, gives us the following information:—"Il n'y a pas mesme de mot original, Arabe, Turc, ni Persien, qui soit propre à signifier l'Astrolabe ni la Boussole. Les Arabes et les Turcs l'appellent communément *Bossola*, se servant du mot Italien, ce qui fait voir que la chose signifiée leur est estrangere, aussi bien que le mot. Celuy de *Kotubnema* est composé et moderne parmi les Persans. Leur naturalistes qui ont escrit si

^a That his attention was directed to the polar star merely for the purpose above assigned, and not with a view to determining the latitudes of places, is, I submit, obvious from the very clumsy and imperfect manner in which he expresses its different altitudes.

amplement sur les vertus de la pierre d'aimant, et qui ont rapporté ce qu'ils en ont trouvé dans les anciens auteurs Grecs, n'ont point fait mention de la vertu de l'aiguille aimantée. On ne trouve non plus aucune observation ancienne des Arabes sur la variation de l'aiguille, ni sur l'usage qu'on en peut faire pour la navigation. Les pilotes Arabes, Turcs, et Persans, preferent les boussoles faites en Europe, à celles qu'ils font eux-mêmes, et ils n'entendent encore que fort médiocrement l'art de frotter les aiguilles."—*Anciennes Relations des Indes et de la Chine*, p. 289. At present the Arabians have at least one name in their own language for the compass, viz. *khibrat-nāmah*; which, however, like the Persian compound referred to in the above extract, is merely a descriptive expression: it might, as far as depends on its etymology, be applied with equal propriety to any kind of instrument constructed for tentative observations;^a and is, in fact, their denomination for a sun-dial, as well as for the instrument in question. Now the circumstance of the Arabians having formerly borrowed an Italian word to denote the compass, affords, by implication, the strongest positive evidence against the assumed antiquity of its use in China. For they carried on a trade by sea with that country, as the Arabic manuscript translated by Renaudot clearly proves, near five centuries before they could, by any possibility, have got the magnetic needle from the Venetians; and therefore, supposing the Chinese to have had a knowledge of this instrument as early as is pretended, must have learned its use from them, and have given it, in the first instance, if any foreign name, a Chinese one. Nor is it to be imagined that they would ever afterwards have substituted for this name a Venetian term: for a people adopt foreign words merely because the things denoted thereby are new to them; and, consequently, whenever they

^a The first element of the Arabic combination *خبرة* *نامه* means a trial, an experiment; the second, something that indicates or points out, whether by writing, as a letter or a book; or by reflexion of light, as a mirror; or in any other way.

subsequently change those denominations, they do so only for such as their own language supplies. The employment, therefore, at one time by the Arabians of an Italian name for the mariner's compass bears decisively, not only against its being an Arabian invention (a point upon which our author very justly insists), but also against its being a Chinese one; and plainly shows that the Chinese could not have been acquainted with its use, till it was brought to them by Musalman traders from the West.

Against the supposed early use of printing in China may be urged four objections, two of which have already been adverted to in a very brief manner and general point of view. In the first place, no allusion whatever to the invention appears in any of the narratives that have reached us, written by travellers who visited that country, before printing was found out in Europe. Yet the authors of those works were men not only of great talents, but also of very inquisitive dispositions, constantly on the watch for objects of curiosity, and just as eager to communicate to their readers as to receive themselves impressions of surprise. Of the degree of astonishment which they must have felt, had they met in the Celestial Empire with specimens of this art, some idea may be formed, by taking into consideration what a ferment was excited in Paris by the first appearance there of printed books, brought to that capital by Fust about the middle of the fifteenth century. It cannot be admitted that printing might possibly have escaped the notice of those travellers through ignorance, on their part, of the graphic system of the Chinese; for they all understood the Tartar language and character, in which books would have been printed as well as in the Chinese ideagrams, during the sway of a Tartar dynasty; and, besides, Marco Polo, the most important witness among them, expressly informs us that he devoted particular attention to the several kinds of writing that were in his day employed in China.^a Now, sup-

^a In reference to the above point, Marco Polo speaks of himself as follows, in his introductory chapter:—"He learned in a short time, and adopted the

posing the art in question to have been there previously in operation, that any one of those wonder-tellers should have refrained from enlarging upon the nature of its productions, which must to his apprehension have constituted the greatest wonder he had to describe, would, indeed, be very strange; but that they should all, in such case, pass over those productions without remark, is quite beyond the range of credibility. The silence, therefore, which they, every one of them, without exception, actually observe upon this subject, bears most powerfully against the supposition before us, and clearly shows that the Chinese could not have arrived at the use of printing till after all the narratives referred to were written.

But the objection upon negative grounds to the assumed antiquity of Chinese printing may be carried still further; for, however the point may be decided in reference to Chinese gunpowder, there cannot be the slightest doubt, with respect to the art involved in this inquiry, but that its invention is nowhere mentioned in the authorized Annals of the Chinese, as translated by P. de Mailla; and he certainly would not have omitted any circumstance told to their credit in the original work. This silence, which is so expressive, considering the quarter it proceeds from, forces upon us the conviction, that printing was unknown in China till after those Annals were completed in their present form; for, most assuredly, if the mandarins had previously become acquainted with it, they would

manners of the Tartars; and acquired a proficiency in four different languages, which he became qualified to read and write. Finding him thus accomplished, his master was desirous of putting his talents for business to the proof, —" *Marsden's edition*, p. 25. As Kublaï-khan had great numbers of Musalmans and Christians in his service, it is probable that our author, his confidential agent and secretary for seventeen years, had to make use of the Arabic and Syriac modes of writing, as well as that of the Tartars. The fourth method referred to was of course the Chinese one; and from his not taking any particular notice of this last, as well as from his being able to learn it along with the other three so quickly, there is, I think, reason to suspect that the graphic system of China was not at all as extensive and complicated in his day, as it now is, and has been ever since it came under the observation of the Jesuits.

have inserted in their grand historic work an account of its invention by one or more of their countrymen at some very remote period; and, accordingly, it may be observed, that numerous claims to this effect have been since set up by them. But it is evident that, if these claims had any foundation in truth, they would necessarily, to a certain extent, agree with each other; and this consideration leads to an objection of a more positive kind against the assumption under examination.

In the second place then, the Chinese pretensions to the early invention of printing exhibit all that diversity of statement which constantly attends upon fictions relating to a common subject, when no standard of reference has been previously established to prevent their discrepance. Here it will be sufficient to notice the disagreement of the Chinese with respect to the date of the invention, which may be judged of by that which prevails among their European admirers upon the same point. To give a sample of the absurdities into which men have fallen by trusting to such authorities, as well as of the extent to which the disagreement in question has been carried, I commence with the following extract from Marchand's history of the art:—"Divers auteurs ont avancé, que cette sorte d'imprimerie [namely, the first rude species of European printing] étoit en usage à la Chine depuis une très longue suite de siècles; les Chinois eux-mêmes la faisant, dit-on, remonter environ 1000 ans au de-là de notre ere vulgaire; et Angelo Roccha remarque que Michel Roger, Jésuite missionnaire à la Chine, lui a affirmé y avoir lû des livres imprimez quatre cens ans avant Jésus-Christ. Isaac de Larrey admet sans scrupule cette epoque, puisqu'il reconnoit que cet art s'exerçoit à la Chine du temps de Cyrus et des sept Sages: et ce qu'il y a de bien singulier, c'est que, ne s'agissant que de l'imprimerie chinoise, il fait parler son Anacharsis, d'*arrangement de caracteres*, comme s'il s'agissoit de la nôtre. Long-temps avant lui, André Favyn avoit bien autrement relevé cette antiquité, puisqu'il n'avoit fait aucune difficulté de la faire remonter jusqu'à Adam lui-même."—*Histoire de l'imprimerie*, note à p. 16. Other state-

ments upon this subject, though not so outrageously absurd, are scarcely less discordant; as may be seen from comparing those which follow. P. Nicolas Trigault, in his account of the mission of the Jesuits to China, written by him, as the dedication shows, in the year 1615, fixes the invention of printing by the Chinese five hundred years before his time. “*Typographia apud Sinas antiquior est aliquanto, quam apud Europæos; nam à quinque retrò seculis certum est, ab iis usu receptam, —*” *De Christiana expeditione, &c.* p. 19. P. Couplet, in the chronological table at the end of his *Scientia Sinensis*, places this invention in the reign of *Mim çum*, which, according to him, lasted from the year of our era 926 to 933. “*Sub hoc typographia cœpit.*”—*Monarchiæ Sinicæ Tabula Chronologica*, p. 65. Muller, in the critical dissertation at the end of his edition of the travels of Marco Polo, adduces a variety of dates assigned by different persons to the invention, for instance: “*Cum ipso Sinarum regno cœptam esse, Joh. Gonz. Mendoza Sinarum fide affirmat. Quidam ante Christum natum in usu fuisse volunt. Boterus ei annos mille et nonnihil amplius tribuit.*”—*Disquisitio Geographica, &c.* p. 63. He, moreover, in the same place, makes the general admission, that there was no agreement upon the point among authors, and states the opinion of some, that the Chinese were ignorant of the time of the invention in consequence of its great remoteness;—rather an inconsistent reason to be given by those who maintained the perfect accuracy of Chinese history, even in the parts of it relating to events of the remotest antiquity. “*Plerique Sinis inventionem ejus tribuunt. De tempore tamen inventionis non eadem sentiunt. Quidam adeò antiquam esse censent, ut inventorem nesciant Sinæ, historiarum aliàs observantissimi.*”—*Ibidem*. It is unnecessary to detain the reader with more examples; in fact, no idle story was ever circulated that more completely betrayed its falsehood, by a total want of agreement between its different narrators. The boasted antiquity, therefore, of Chinese printing is disproved, as well by the national evidence actually brought forward in support of it, as by the

testimony, both national and foreign, that has been withheld, but which certainly would have been adduced, had the ostentatious claims made under this head any foundation in truth.

On the other hand, in favour of Chinese pretensions with regard to the invention of printing, there has, as far as I can find, but a single foreign attestation of early date been produced, and that too of very suspicious authority; it is alleged to be given by a person who never was in China, but derived his information from the writings of certain Chinese sages, represented to have been brought to Persia, by the feudal chieftains who ruled that country, under the auspices of Mangu-khan and Kublaï-khan, the fourth and fifth emperors of the Sino-Mogul dynasty. The attestation referred to occurs in a Persian work, edited by Muller, which I have not seen; but his translation of the passage in which it is conveyed, is quoted by Meerman in the treatise written by him on the origin of Typography. This quotation and some other extracts bearing upon the subject are here subjoined; as a brief review of them will, I think, enable us to judge what degree of credit the passage in question is entitled to. Meerman, in the text of his work, makes the ensuing statement upon the point before us:—"Abdalla saltem Abusaid, Beidavæus, in *Historiæ Sinensis* parte octava, quam Persice, anno Hegiræ 717, id est Christi 1317, scripsit, de arte hac, tanquam frequentissimo usu a Sinensibus recepta, loquitur."—*Origines Typographicæ*, tom. i. p. 218. And his note upon this statement is as follows:—"Liber hic editus est Persice et Latine cura Andr. Mulleri, Berolini anno 1677, ex cujus interpretatione locum integrum apponam, tum quod a nullo scriptore nostri argumenti productus fuerit, tum quod opus ipsum hodie raro sit obvium. Ita ergo auctor p. 8, et seq. 'Omnes item libri qui secundum illos (tres philosophos, Fu-hin Chu-xang, Xen-gu Chu-xang, et Xen-chun Chu-xang) eduntur, elegantissime scripti sunt; ita ut singulas paginas hujus libri caractere eleganti in tabulas scribant. Omnes etiam sapientes summa cum observantia scripta conferunt, quæ caractere suo in dorso tabulæ confirmant. Postea sculptoribus

omnium præstantissimis sculpenda dant; cumque omnes paginas libri juxta præscriptam ideam ad finem perduxerunt, singulis foliis numerum adscribunt. Has tabulas, velut formulam officinæ monetariæ, in loculis sub sigillo oculatorum et fidelissimorum commissariorum deponunt, inque bibliothecas reponunt, ideoque insigniis muniunt. Si quis apographum hujus libri desideret, ante omnia collegium hoc adit, datque certam pecuniæ summam custodibus. Hi tabulas istas afferunt, ac sigillum aureum apographi chartis imprimunt, sicque tradunt. Hac ratione fieri non potest, ut exempla libri plus aut minus contineant, quin fide dignissima sint.'”—*Ibidem*. Bayer, in the preface (dated by him 1730) to his *Museum Sinicum*, writes thus upon the same subject:—“Hoc erat istuc tempus [in the margin is written A. C. 1253], cum Hulacus, auspiciis Muncacæ Chani fratris majoris natu, Persiam ingressus doctos homines e Sinensibus secum habuit, in quibus Fu-muen-gi, cognomento *Gin-xim* (tanquam sanctum omnisque doctrinæ scientia eruditum virum dicas) Nassiroddino Tusæo, tum maxime tabulas Ilchanicas commentanti, astrorum positus temporumque leges ex majorum suorum opinione et instituto explicuit. Hulaci pronepos Casanus post avum Abacam et patrem Argunem, Cublaii summi imperatoris auspiciis, Persiam tenuit. Is, cum chronologiam Casanicam Rexistottino scribendam mandaret, duos philosophos Sinenses in aula habuit, a quibus non modo, quæ astrorum temporumque doctrina, sed etiam quæ medicinæ facultas, quæ rerum gestarum memoria a Sinis tradita sit, cognosceret. Quæ nunc oblivione obtererentur, nisi extitisset Abdalla Abusaidus Beidavæus modo plane annis quadringentis quinquaginta sex ante nos, qui historiam Sinicam illis auctoribus commentari instituit, cum et libros eorum se vidisse prædicat, et scripturam mirifice elegantem laudibus extollit, et totum typographiæ negotium explicat.”—*Museum Sinicum*, tom. i. præf. p. 2. Of the Persian author to whom these extracts relate, Herbelot gives the following account in his *Bibliothèque Orientale*:—“*Beidhavi*, Surnom de Nassereddin Abusaid Abdalla Ben Omar, natif de la ville de Beidhah [dans la Province de

Fars ou Perse proprement dite] ; il fut cadhi ou juge de la ville de Schiraz en Perse, d'où il passa à celle de Tauris, où il mourut l'an de l'Hegire 685, ou 692. Il a composé un commentaire litteral en deux volumes sur l'Alcoran, qui porte le titre d'*Anuár al tanzil-u-asrar al tavi*, qui a été expliqué et commenté par plusieurs autres auteurs. Nous avons aussi de lui un autre ouvrage intitulé *Al thavalé* sur les fondemens et points principaux de la religion Mahometane. L'auteur du *Lebtarikh* cite aussi un de ses ouvrages qui a pour titre *Nedhám al tavarikh*, qui est une histoire general."

There are several discrepancies between the above statements ; but, passing by the others, let us look to those which hold in their dates. According to Herbelot, Abdalla Abusaid died about thirty years before the period at which he is represented by Meerman to have composed his history of China (a work, by the way, which the Bibliotheque Orientale does not ascribe to this author) ; and Bayer makes out the same history older than Meerman does, by forty-three years. Differences to such an extent are sufficient to shew that nothing certain is known, as to when (or even by whom) this history was written ; and, consequently, if the passage referred to were genuine, the only effect it could have, when regarded in combination with what has been already advanced upon the subject, would be to reduce the age to be conceded to the work in which it appears, instead of establishing that claimed for Chinese printing. But, upon examination of this passage through the medium of Muller's translation, there will, I think, be found great reason for suspecting that it did not issue from the pen of the author, but was inserted in the text by some more recent writer. Here I shall not dwell upon the abruptness of the transition from an allusion to the books of three Chinese philosophers, to the phrase, *this book*, when no single one had been previously mentioned ;—an incoherence which, supposing the text generally written in a connected style, and this part of it strictly translated, would point out, either a chasm in the extant work, or the commencement of a spurious addition to it, but which, in the absence of the original, cannot, I admit, be relied on as a

sure criterion of what it thus indicates. Abstaining, then, from all verbal criticism in this instance, I shall confine my remarks to the general purport of the passage in question. In this, a Persian is made to express himself about printing, with as much apathy and coolness, as if he had been accustomed all his life to the productions of an art that is scarcely even yet known in his country; and, although he shows much admiration of the neatness and elegance of the characters exhibited in certain Chinese books, he does not betray the least emotion of astonishment at the typographical process he minutely describes, by which the copies of a work can be multiplied indefinitely and without delay;—the very property of the invention which, at some period between 1462 and 1466, threw all Paris into an uproar, and which the learned Parisians of that day could find no way of accounting for, except by the power of magic or the interference of the devil. Surely a description of printing in which this property of it is thus noticed, without any accompanying expression of surprise, could not have been written by an author of the fourteenth century; who never was in China, and therefore, even granting for a moment that the art was so early practised in that empire, could have had no opportunity whatever of acquiring the familiarity with the subject, which the writer of this segment of the text obviously exposes. Hence it follows, that, unless the entire work was composed at a much later time than accords with the date hitherto assigned to it, the paragraph under discussion must be an interpolation fraudulently introduced into the place where it is found; and in either case, it affords no aid in deciding the point at issue. But should this inference be thought, in the grounds on which it rests, not strong enough completely to overturn the only testimony that has been given in support of the antiquity of Chinese printing, it must, at all events, I submit, be allowed to prove that testimony, even considered by itself, to be of very doubtful validity, and consequently of no weight, when viewed in comparison with the accumulation of evidence which bears upon the opposite side of the question.

In the third place, I have to notice the proof of the modern origin of Chinese printing, which is supplied by the very striking resemblance it has to the European art in its primitive state. The prominent features of this resemblance consist in, first, the use of solid wooden blocks, instead of moveable metal types; and, secondly, the application of impressions to only one side of the paper, and the consequent doubling of the sheets in binding. That the Chinese method is affected with these imperfections, is shown by Sir George Staunton, in the following passages of his account of Lord Macartney's embassy to China: "— the Chinese art of printing. It consists in nothing more than in cutting, in relief, the forms of the written characters on some compact wood, daubing afterwards those characters with a black glutinous substance, and pressing upon them different sheets of paper;—" *Authentic Account*, &c. vol. ii. p. 293. "The paper used by the Chinese for their publications, is too thin and weak to receive distinct impressions on both sides. The engraved board on which the paper is laid to take the impression on one side, generally contains the characters for two pages. The paper, when printed off, is doubled together, the blank sides touching each other. The fold forms the outer edge, which thus is double; while all the single edges, contrary to the mode of European bookbinders, are stitched together, and bound into a volume. After the edition is worked off, the plates or boards are collected together; and it is generally mentioned in the preface where they are deposited, in case a second edition should be called for."—*Ibidem*, pp. 294–5. From the picture here presented to us, let us turn to Marchand's description of the first rude productions of the art in Europe. "On ne sauroit pourtant encore regarder ces premières impressions, que comme de foibles essais, et comme des tentatives très imparfaites. En effet, *n'étant fabriquées qu'à l'aide de planches de bois*, telles que je viens de les décrire, c'étoient bien moins de véritables impressions, que de simples gravûres, assez semblables à nos images taillées en bois, on mieux encore aux

fameux imprimez de la Chine et du Japon,^a que les habiles gens ne trouvent pas même dignes du nom de fruits de l'imprimerie, et qu'ils ne regardent que comme l'effet de simples planches gravées. Aussi sont-elles sujettes aux mêmes inconvéniens : car, ne pouvant absolument servir qu'à une nouvelle impression du même ouvrage, et remplissant inutilement des magasins entiers, elles devenoient bientôt à charge par leur nombre ; *et ne s'imprimant que d'un côté du papier, dont on étoit obligé de coller ensuite les deux faces blanches l'une contre l'autre afin de cacher ce défaut*, elles causoient nécessairement, et double peine, et double dépense, pour ne produire après tout qu'un ouvrage assez imparfait."—*Histoire de l'Imprimerie*, pp. 15–17.

The resemblance between the kinds of printing just brought under view together, is so very close, that several authors have, to account for it, resorted to the absurd position, that the European art was originally derived from China. Upon this point Marchand gives us the following information : "De la maniere dont la plupart des ecrivains parlent de cette imprimerie chinoise, à peine peut-on s'en former une juste idée. Selon divers d'entre eux, comme Paul Jove, Guy Pancirole, Gonzales de Mendoza, et vingt autres, c'est la même chose que notre imprimerie. Pour l'appuier, ces mêmes auteurs débitent qu'un Marchand Allemand, ou Guttenberg lui-même selon quelques-uns, après l'avoir curieusement et deligemment examinée à la Chine, la transporta et l'établit en Allemagne."—*Histoire de l'Imprimerie*, note à p. 16. The authors here referred to saw the strong probability of the two kinds they compared being connected, as agreeing in a combination of peculiarities scarcely possible to have been hit upon, in common, by different parties, without any communication with each other. But they inverted the order of this connexion ; and, in consequence, their

^a The printing used in Japan is obviously derived from that of China. In reference to this point Marchand makes the following statement : "L'imprimerie du Japon est toute semblable à celle de la Chine, de laquelle elle a probablement été imitée."—*Hist. de l'Imprimerie*, note à p. 18.

account of the matter has been long since exploded. Had they, on the other hand, making use of the same chain of reasoning, begun at the end of it which is certainly known, they would have come to a conclusion which has every appearance of being correct. That European printing has had an independent origin, admits not of the slightest doubt;^a and as it is not the offspring, it must, from their affinity, be the parent stock of the Chinese branch of the art.

It is no objection to the credibility of the result just arrived at, that the way in which it was actually brought about, can now no longer be determined with certainty: there are many other facts likewise which are perfectly clear, though the means that led to their occurrence are involved in obscurity. The introduction, however, of the art in question into China admits of an explanation that is invested with some degree of probability; and is the more likely to be the true one, from the analogy of the case it unfolds, to those which have been previously con-

^a The rude method of printing described in the quotation before the last from Marchand, was followed by three great improvements in rapid succession. They consisted in the substitution for the solid blocks, of moveable types that were formed, first, of wood, secondly, of cut metal, and thirdly, of cast metal. The third and greatest of these improvements, was certainly introduced into use about the year 1452, in Mentz, by Peter Schoeffer, one of the workmen, and afterwards the son-in-law and partner of John Fust; and the second, in the same city, about 1444, by Gutenberg, an older partner of Fust's, who came originally from Strasburgh. The "*Durandi Rationale divinorum officiorum*" was printed by Fust and Schoeffer, with the third kind of types, in 1459; and the Bible, by Fust, Gutenberg, and some other partners, with the second kind, in 1450;—a work which it took above six years to execute. It is disputed whether the primitive process, as well as the first improvement of it, originated with Gutenberg, or, a few years earlier, with Laurentius of Haerlem. The uncertainty on this point arises from the art having been at first employed to counterfeit writing; and as the oldest specimens of it were originally designed for sale as manuscript books, the names of their printers were not attached to them. The lives, however, of the individuals between whom the credit of the original invention is divided, are so far well known, as to render it perfectly certain, that neither of them was ever out of Europe, or ever had any communication direct or indirect with the Chinese.

sidered. When the species of printing first made use of in Europe, went out of vogue in this quarter of the world, the Venetians, it may be naturally conceived, readily parted with its specimens and the implements employed in their production; and the cuts or drawings with which the first primers abounded, probably caught the attention of the Arabians in Alexandria. But the latter people, it is likely, acted in this instance only as traders; they merely looked to the saleableness of those articles, without troubling themselves about their nature and construction: and the Chinese appear to have been the only customers they met with in the East, who took a right view of the invention, and applied it to its proper use. Whether it was exactly in this way or not, that a knowledge of printing was obtained by the inhabitants of the Celestial Empire, it is, at all events, I submit, nearly certain that the art was conveyed to them through some channel or other from Europe, and not invented in their own country.

In the fourth place, the consideration that printing has never advanced in China beyond the very rudest and most imperfect state, leads to the same conclusion. The natural inference, indeed, from this circumstance, was long evaded by the confident assertion, that the mode of taking impressions by means of solid blocks, was the one most suited to the peculiar nature of Chinese writing, on account of the prodigious number and variety of its elements; but the fallacy of this representation of the case has, of late years, been fully established. The Protestant missionaries in the East have found by experience, that moveable types are by far the best for Chinese, as well as for alphabetic printing; as may be seen from the following account of the labours of the missionary press of the Anglo-Chinese College in Malacca, extracted from an Essay by the Rev. W. Ellis, which is prefixed to the third edition of Gutzlaff's *Journal of three Voyages along the Coast of China*:—
“ There is a printing establishment connected with the college, which has for many years supplied the greater part of the books distributed in China, and at the missionary stations in that

quarter of the world. During the year 1836, upwards of eleven thousand volumes of the Sacred Scriptures were printed, besides nearly sixty thousand tracts. The attention of one of the missionaries, the Rev. D. Dyer, has been for several years past directed to the means of multiplying the supply of books, by means of printing Chinese from metal types. The peculiarity of the Chinese character, the vast number and consequent variety of the character, have occasioned many difficulties; but these have been overcome by the skill and perseverance of Mr. Dyer, who has, by his indefatigable industry, realized the important object at which he aimed, and has, by the successful introduction of Chinese metal types, laid a permanent foundation for a speedy and abundant supply of the Holy Scriptures and other books, in a correct and elegant style of execution.”—*Brief Notice of China and Siam*, pp. 45–6.

Printing appears to have been introduced into China earlier than gunpowder; and there is evidence of its having been in use among the Chinese before the year of our era 1521. Paul Jovius attests that Pope Leo the Tenth, who died in the latter part of that year, had got one of their printed books a present from the king of Portugal, and showed it to him. The following are his words upon this subject: “De Cataio Lusitani negotiatores multa memoratu digna referunt, et quod maxime mirandum videtur, ibi esse typographos artifices, qui libros historias et sacrorum cæremonias continentes, more nostro imprimant; quorum longissima folia introrsus quadrata serie complentur. Cujus generis volumen à rege Lusitaniæ cum elephante dono missum Leo pontifex humaniter nobis ostendit.”—*Pauli Jovii Hist. sui temporis*, lib. xiv. p. 161. Ed°. Par. 1558. On the other hand it is denied, in an old foreign periodical of some eminence, that any work printed in the Chinese character reached Europe, till after the seizure of the Philippine islands by the Spaniards, in 1564. The former evidence seems better entitled to credit; however I subjoin the latter, to let the reader decide for himself between these conflicting statements: “— en 1564, les Espagnols conquièrent les isles Philippines, où

ils lierent quelque commerce avec les Chinois, et d'où furent pour la première fois transportés dans la bibliothèque Vaticane et dans le monastere de l'Escorial, les premiers livres chinois qu'on eût vus en Europe."—*Journal des Sçavans*, tom. xcix. p. 351.

There is one more omission in all the early accounts of China, to which I wish to direct attention: no description is given of the religious or philosophical tenets of Confucius, nor even is his name ever mentioned, as far as I can ascertain, in any of them. This omission in the narratives of Marco Polo and Sir John Maundevile is the more remarkable; because both those travellers were literary men; and also because they occasionally do refer to subjects that naturally would have led them to this topic, had the Chinese sage in question and his sect been formerly held in the same estimation, as they now are, and have been for some centuries past. Thus the former author adverts to the following points:—"There are also [in the city of *Singui*] persons distinguished as professors of learning, or, as we should term them, philosophers, and others who may be called magicians or enchanters."—*Marsden's edition*, p. 505. "In other streets [of *Kin-sai*] are the dwellings of the physicians and the astrologers, who also give instructions in reading and writing, as well as in many other arts."^a—519. "—from a disinclination to the shedding of blood, which their *Baksis*, or learned astrologers, instruct them to avoid."—p. 299. "Besides the appellations before mentioned by which they are dis-

^a From the above passage it is evident that, when Marco Polo was among the Chinese, their graphic system must have been composed of much fewer and simpler elements than it now is. The art of reading and writing was, it appears, then taught in one of the most populous and wealthy cities of China, not by a class of persons wholly engaged in the business of education, but by professional men employed chiefly in other ways, and who could devote only a very subordinate portion of their time to that occupation. The same conclusion has been already deduced from Marco's telling us that "he learned in a short time" four different kinds of writing made use of by the subjects of Kublaï-khan, including, of course, among them the national graphic system of China.

tinguished from each other, they are likewise termed *Baksi*,^a which applies to their religious sect or order; as we should say friars, preachers, or minors.”—p. 252. “In this country there are great monasteries and abbeys, so extensive, indeed, that they might pass for small cities; some of them containing as many as two thousand monks, who are devoted to the service of their divinities, according to the established religious customs of the people. These are clad in a better style of dress than the other inhabitants; they shave their heads and their beards, and celebrate the festivals of their idols with the utmost possible solemnity; having bands of vocal music and burning tapers. Some of this class are allowed to take wives. There is likewise another religious order, the members of which are named *Sensim*,^b

^a Upon the above term Mr. Marsden gives us the following information:—“We find in the *Ayin Akbari* of Abu’lfazel, a confirmation of what is here asserted to be the meaning of the term *Baksi*, *Bakshi*, or, according to the Bengal pronunciation of Persian, *Bukshi*, which is not furnished by the dictionaries. Under the head of the ‘Doctrine of Boodh,’ he says: ‘The learned among the Persians and Arabians call the priests of this religion *Bukshee*, and in Tibbet they are stiled Lama.’ Vol. iii. p. 157.”—*Marsden’s edition*, note in p. 258. From Marco’s using a Persian or Arabic name for the priests of Buddha or Fo, it would appear that he associated more with the foreigners in the service of Kublaï-khan than with the native Chinese.

^b Mr. Marsden conceives the above term, as well as *Baksi*, to be a name for the bonzes or priests of Fo, from its similarity to *Sang* or *Shang-jin*, stated by Morrison to be Chinese denominations of those priests, in No. 8822 of the Part of his Dictionary that is arranged according to the sounds attached to the characters. But it is evident that Marco Polo describes the *Baksi* and *Sensim* as priests of different religions; and the circumstance of the latter class not being image-worshippers excludes them from belonging to the sect of Buddha; while, on the other hand, the very same circumstance, as well as that of their paying adoration to fire, leads to the conclusion that they were adherents to the Pagan system that formerly prevailed among the Persians, of the early introduction of which into China, long before the occupation of that country by the armies of Jenghiz-khan, there are traces yet extant. The second of the old Arabian accounts of the Celestial Empire translated by Renaudot records, in a passage that will presently be quoted, a massacre of the inhabitants of Can-fu, or Can-ton, in the year of the Hegira corresponding to 877 of our era, in which great numbers of *Parsis*, among the professors of other creeds,

who observe strict abstinence, and lead very austere lives, having no other food than a kind of pollard, which they steep in warm water, until the farinaceous part is separated from the bran; and in that state they eat it. This sect pay adoration to fire, and are considered by the others as schismatics, not worshipping idols as they do. There is a material difference between them in regard to the rules of their orders, and these last described never marry in any instance.”—pp. 253–4. Thus, again, the latter of the above-mentioned authors informs us of the high distinction with which the philosophers were treated in China, of the departments of learning in which they excelled, and of the influence they exerted over the measures of government, in the following extracts:—“And at o syde of the Emperour’s table, sitten many filosofres, that ben preved for wise men in many dyverse scyences; as of astronomye, nigromancye, geomancye, pyromancye, ydromancye, of augurye and of many other scyences.”—*The Voiage and Travaile, &c.* p. 281. “And zif there falle werre in ony syde to the Emperour, anon the philosophres comen, and seyn here avys afre her calculaciouns, and conseynlen the Emperour of here avys, be here sciences; so that the Emperour dothe no thing with outen here conseil.”—p. 283. It is obvious that none of the foregoing delineations of paganism or philosophy are applicable to the sect of Confucius. This total silence with respect to the substance of his doctrines, as well as his name, in the very passages where the kinds of religion and learning most prevalent among the Chinese are described, shows, I submit, pretty clearly that, although his life may have preceded those of our authors, yet his celebrity could not have commenced till after the termination of both their visits to China.

were slain in that city. *Sensim*, I admit, differs so little from *Shang-jin*, that they very probably are the same compound, only altered a little in its pronunciation since the time of the Venetian traveller: this compound, however, is not a proper name, but a descriptive appellation, signifying literally, *superior men*;—a title which, it is obvious, may have been formerly given to the Parsis, though it is now appropriated to the Buddhistic priesthood.

That the antiquity of this sage is greatly overrated by the Chinese, has already been deduced from internal evidence of various kinds;—from the clear indications, in his moral system, of tenets borrowed from those of a Grecian sect that took its rise in Egypt no earlier than the third century, left traces of its operations in India during the sixth and seventh centuries, and could not have reached China till a yet later period;—from certain unideagraphic properties of his writing, which, it has been shown, could not have been introduced into it sooner than the latter end, or at any rate not sooner than the middle of the ninth century;—and from the rhyming versification observable in some of the odes collected by him, which, it has likewise been proved, is wholly alien from the nature of ideagraphic composition, and could not have been communicated to Chinese poetry before the epoch last specified. I now proceed to the consideration of a piece of external evidence, pointing out, in accordance with these limitations, a somewhat more definite boundary of the age in which he lived: it is supplied in the second of the old Arabic accounts of China translated by Renaudot, of which the commencing part is as follows:

“Seconde Relation, ou Discours d’Abuzeid El Hacen Sirafien, sur le Voyage des Indes et de la Chine.

“J’ay examiné avec attention le livre que j’avois ordre de lire, afin de confirmer le recit que l’auteur fait, lors qu’il se trouve conforme à ce que j’ay appris des choses de la mer, des royaumes qui sont sur les costes, et de l’estat des païs; et pour rapporter, à ce sujet, ce que j’ay sceu d’ailleurs de leurs histoires, et qui ne se trouve pas dans ce livre. J’ay trouvé qu’il a esté composé l’an 237 de l’Hegire (851 de J. C.), et que les relations de l’auteur touchant les choses de la mer estoient alors très-veritables, et conformes à ce que j’ay appris par les différentes relations des marchands qui partent d’Irak, pour la navigation de ces mers. J’ay reconnu aussi que tout ce que l’auteur rapporte, est conforme à la verité, excepté en quelques endroits. Il dit, en parlant de la coustume de mettre des viandes auprès

des morts qu'il attribue aux Chinois : lors qu'ils ont mis le soir quelque chose à manger auprès du mort, et que le matin ils ne trouvent plus rien, ils disent qu'il a mangé. Cette mesme chose nous avoit aussi esté rapportée, et nous l'avons crue, jusqu'à ce que nous avons trouvé un homme digne de foy, que nous avons interrogé sur ce sujet. Il a dit que la chose n'estoit pas ainsi, et que cette pensée n'avoit aucun fondement, non plus que l'opinion vulgaire des peuples idolatres, qui croient que les idoles leur parlent. Il nous dit aussi que, depuis ce temps-là, les affaires de la Chine estoient entierement changées.

“ On rapporte sur ce sujet plusieurs histoires, qui font voir les causes de l'interruption des voyages à la Chine, et comment le païs a esté ruiné, plusieurs coustumes abolies, et l'Empire divisé. Je rapporteray icy ce que j'ay appris des causes de ce changement. Celuy qui est arrivé à la Chine dans la pluspart des affaires de cet empire, qui a fait cesser la justice et la droiture qu'on y observoit autrefois, et qui a dans la suite interrompu la navigation ordinaire de Siraf à la Chine, a eu cette origine.

“ Un officier considerable par ses emplois, mais qui n'estoit pas de la famille royale, se revolta il y a quelque temps. Il s'appelloit Baichu, et il commença d'abord par des hostilités dans le païs, en portant ses armes en plusieurs endroits, au grand dommage des habitans ; et, en ayant attiré une partie par ses liberalitez, il assembla quantité de vagabonds et de gens sans aveu, dont il forma un corps de troupes assez considerable. Se trouvant ainsi fortifié et en estat de tout entreprendre, il fit paroistre le dessein qu'il avoit de se rendre maistre de l'Empire. Il marcha d'abord vers Canfu, qui est une des plus considerables villes de la Chine, et celle où abordoient alors tous les marchands Arabes. Elle est située sur une grande riviere, à quelques jours de distance de son embouchure, et on y trouve de l'eau douce. Ceux de la ville refuserent de luy ouvrir leurs portes, ce qui le fit resoudre à les assieger ; et le siege dura long-temps. Ce fut l'an 264 de l'Hegire (877 de J. C.). Enfin s'estant rendu maistre de la ville, il fit passer au fil de l'épée tous les habitans. Des personnes bien informées des

affaires de la Chine, assurent que, sans compter les Chinois qu'il fit massacrer en cette occasion, il perit six vingt mille Mahometans, Juifs, Chrestiens, ou Parsis, qui demeuroient dans la ville pour leur negoce. On a sçu exactement le nombre de ceux de ces quatre religions qui perirent alors, parce que les Chinois sont fort soigneux de les compter. Il fit aussi couper tous les meuriers, et presque tous les autres arbres : nous parlons des meuriers en particulier ; parce que les Chinois preparent leurs feüilles avec grand soin pour les vers à soye, afin qu'ils s'y attachent pour travailler. Ce ravage est cause que la soye a manqué, et le commerce qui s'en faisoit dans les païs soumis aux Arabes, est entierement cessé.

“ Après avoir ainsi saccagé et ruiné Canfu, il s'empara de plusieurs autres villes, qu'il attaqua l'une après l'autre, sans que l'Empereur de la Chine pust s'opposer à ses progres. Il s'avança ensuite jusqu'auprès de la ville capitale appelée Cumdan. L'Empereur de la Chine abandonna sa ville royale, et se retira en desordre jusqu'à la ville de Hamdou, qui est sur la frontiere du costé de la province de Tibet. Cependant le rebelle élevé par des succez si avantageux, et se trouvant maistre du païs, attaqua les autres villes, qu'il ruina, après avoir tué la plus grande partie des habitans, dans le dessein d'envelopper dans ce carnage general tous ceux de la famille royale, afin qu'il ne restast personne qui pust luy disputer l'Empire. On sçut les nouvelles de ces revolutions, et la desolation generale de toute la Chine, qui dure encore presentement.

“ Les choses demeurerent en cet estat, sans que ce rebelle eust aucun desavantage qui diminuast sa puissance et son autorité. Enfin l'Empereur de la Chine escrivit au Roy de Tagazgaz dans le Turquestan, avec lequel, outre le voisinage de leurs estats, il avoit quelque alliance par mariage. Il luy envoya en mesme temps une ambassade, pour le prier de le delivrer de ce rebelle. Le Roy de Tagazgaz envoya son fils avec une armée fort nombreuse contre le rebelle, et après plusieurs batailles et des combats presque continuels, il le défit entierement. On ne sçut pas ce que ce rebelle estoit devenu ; et les uns croient qu'il fut tué dans un combat, les autres qu'il

mourut d'une autre maniere. L'Empereur de la Chine revint alors à sa ville de Cumdan, et quoy qu'il se trouvast dans une extreme foiblesse, et qu'il eust presque perdu tout courage, à cause de la dissipation de ses finances, de la perte de ses capitaines et de ses meilleurs soldats, et des miseres passées, il ne laissa pas de se rendre maistre de toutes les provinces qui avoient esté conquises. Il ne toucha pas aux biens des habitans, mais il se contenta de ce qu'il pouvoit avoir entre les mains, et de ce qui restoit des deniers publics. La necessité de ses affaires l'obligea à se contenter de ce que ses sujets luy voulurent donner, et de n'exiger d'eux que la soumission à ses ordres, sans les contraindre à luy fournir de l'argent, parce que les rois ou gouverneurs l'avoient dissipé.

“ Ainsi la Chine se trouva dans un estat presque semblable à celui de l'Empire d'Alexandre, après la défaite et la mort de Darius, lors qu'il distribua les païs conquis sur les Perses à differents princes, qui establirent autant de royaumes. Car chacun de ces princes commença à se joindre avec quelque autre, pour faire la guerre à quelqu'un d'entr'eux, sans la permission de l'Empereur ; et lors que le plus fort avoit défait le plus foible, et s'estoit rendu maistre de la province que l'autre gouvernoit, il la ravageoit entierement, il emportoit tout ce qui s'y trouvoit, et mangeoit tous les sujets de son ennemy. Cette cruauté leur est permise selon les loix de leur religion, jusques là mesme, qu'ils vendent de la chair humaine dans leurs places publiques.^a Ces desordres donnerent lieu à plusieurs injustices envers les

^a This part of our author's narrative, if unsupported by other accounts, would be scarcely credible ; but it is to be observed that, according to Marco Polo, the same barbarous practice of eating human flesh still continued in his time to prevail in some parts of the Celestial Empire ; and even to this day the Chinese are exceedingly dirty feeders. Of their avidity for carrion the following instance is incidentally related by Mr. Barrow ; it is stated by him to have occurred during Lord Macartney's embassy to China, a few miles off the coast, and not far from the mouth of the Pei-ho, or white river. “ Numbers of the hogs and the fowls [sent out to the English fleet as a present from the Chinese government] had been bruised to death on the passage, which were thrown overboard from the Lion with disdain ; but the Chinese eagerly picked them up, washed them clean, and laid them in salt.”—*Travels in China*, p. 67.

marchands qui alloient dans le païs; et après qu'elles furent presque passées en coustume, il n'y eut aucune sorte de vexations, ny de mauvais traitements qu'ils n'exerçassent envers les estrangers Arabes, et les maistres des navires. Ils obligerent les marchands à payer ce qu'ils ne devoient pas, ils saisirent leurs effets, et ils tinrent à leur égarde un procedé entierement contraire aux anciennes coustumes. Dieu les en a punis en retirant ses benedictions de dessus eux en toutes sortes de manieres, et particulièrement en ce que la navigation a esté abandonnée, et que les marchands sont venus en foule à Siraf et à Homan, selon les ordres infailibles du Maistre Tout-puissant, dont le nom soit benit."—*Anciennes Relations des Indes et de la Chine*, pp. 49–55.

This extract affords, I conceive, some grounds for concluding that the account from which it is taken, could not have been drawn up much sooner than the middle of the tenth century. For instance, a custom respecting the treatment of the dead, which appears from the older Arabic narrative, to have prevailed in China about the middle of the ninth century, had entirely ceased before this one was composed. But the state of the soul after death has ever been a subject of interest and curiosity to even the most uncultivated minds; however absurd, then, the custom in question might be, yet connected as it was with this subject, it surely could not have been quite eradicated in any short space of time, among an ignorant and superstitious people. Besides, the author speaks of the consequences of the rebellion he records, of the year 877, as having continued "to this day" (*encore presentement*); and of the occurrences which immediately preceded that calamity, as having taken place "formerly" (*autrefois*)^a;—modes of expression which could scarcely

^a Both forms of expression, relative to the time of the rebellion of 877, are used by the author in other parts also of his narrative; as, for example, in the following passage: "Les Chinois avoient *autrefois* un ordre merveilleux dans le gouvernement de leur païs, avant que les derniers revolutions l'eussent entierement changé, en le reduisant dans l'estat où il se trouve *presentement*."—*Anciennes Relations des Indes et de la Chine*, p. 86.

be applied to events removed, by a less distance than half a century, from the age in which he lived. Whatever portion of the tenth century may have elapsed, before he wrote,—and it is just as likely to have exceeded, as to have fallen short of fifty years,—he describes China as torn asunder, indeed, into a great number of petty states, but still as governed, the whole of it, for that interval, by native princes; whereas the Chinese Annals represent the northern division of the empire, as held in subjection, during the same interval, by the Khi-tan Tartars. We have before seen those Annals in like manner refuted by the *Geographia Nubiensis*, in their statement of northern China having been under the dominion of the Kin Tartars, for a length of time that included the latter half of the twelfth century; and the probability is, that, wherever external history can be brought to bear on any part of them that relates to times anterior to the age of Jenghiz-khan, its fallacy will be similarly exposed. It is a curious circumstance that the Egyptian and Chinese historians should have adopted just the same plan of deception; and that they should each be detected in the attempt to sustain the credit of their respective systems of writing, even at the expense of national vanity, by fabricating imaginary conquests of their respective countries. The parallel, however, between the two cases does not extend so far as to admit of the assertion, that, as the conquest of Egypt by the Israelites which is recorded by Manetho, never took place, so neither was China ever subdued by Tartars, before the invasion of that country by the armies of Jenghiz-khan. On the contrary, it is most likely that the Celestial Empire was often previously overrun by hordes of the Tartar or Scythian race; and, very possibly, it was first peopled by one of those hordes.^a But the particulars of those

^a This conjecture derives support from the general resemblance, in features, of the Chinese to the Tartars, notwithstanding some subordinate differences of physiognomy by which they are distinguished from each other. Hence it is, that in the subdivision by naturalists of the human race into different great families, those two nations are referred to a common lineage, and classed under a common head; as is noticed by M. Abel-Rémusat in the

successive irruptions can now no longer be ascertained; and the early history of China is irrecoverably lost, as likewise is that of every other country, whose inhabitants had not the benefit of alphabetic writing in ancient times.

What, however, most deserves notice in the foregoing extract, is the very striking similarity between the condition of

following passage, taken from the Dissertation which is prefixed to his *Recherches sur les Langues Tartares*. “Deux races seulement, suivant les naturalistes, se trouvent actuellement dans l’Asie septentrionale. L’une est celle qu’ils ont nommée *Caucasique*, parce qu’ils ont supposé qu’elle pourroit tirer son origine du mont Caucase; l’autre a été appelée *race Mongole* ou *race jaune*, et ne me paroît convenablement désignée ni par l’une ni par l’autre de ces dénominations. La race Caucasique, qu’on regarde en Europe comme le type de la beauté de notre espèce, parce que tous les peuples de cette partie du monde en sont issus, renferme en Tartarie les Turks, que les écrivains Russes nomment très-improprement Tatars. Dans la race Mongole, sont comprises des nations très-diverses, sous tout autre rapport que celui des traits de la face, et peut-être différentes sous ce rapport même, telles que les Chinois, les Mongols ou Tatars proprement dits, les Tongous, et les Mandchous, et vraisemblablement aussi les Tibétains.”—*Discours Préliminaire*, p. xxxvi. On the other hand, the descent of the Chinese from the Tartars is objected to, on the ground of the difference of their languages; but perhaps it may be found that too much stress is laid on this objection. Living tongues are known to change considerably in process of time,—particularly when their tendency to alteration is not checked by the use of alphabetic writing;—so that the derivatives of a common tongue may differ greatly, not only from it, but also from each other. In the case, therefore, of languages very imperfectly understood, it is not easy to determine what degree of diversity amounts to a radical difference, such as would be incompatible with the speakers of those languages being the offspring of a common stock. For instance, different hordes of Tartars make use at present of very different dialects, and so likewise, it is alleged, do the inhabitants of different provinces of China; but can it be thence inferred to a certainty, that the Tartars and the Chinese are each descended from a great variety of nations? M. Abel-Rémusat, I allow, comes to this conclusion with respect to the former people; but he is evidently not warranted in so doing. He, indeed, goes still farther, and maintains that the several hordes of Tartars in question are not merely of different descent, but that they belong to quite different races of men, so distinct from each other as never from the first to have had a common origin;—a mode of impugning the historic truth of the Bible, which needs only be stated, to subject it to merited contempt.

China it unfolds, and that which is repeatedly described in the works of Confucius, as existing in his time. In each instance the same picture is exhibited, of anarchy, rapine, and misery, arising out of the separation of the empire into a number of small independent states, badly governed, and continually at war with each other. The philosopher, indeed, and the merchant appear to have directed their chief attention to different parts of this scene; the prevalence of vice, and, in particular, of insubordination, being more prominently brought under view by the former, and the cessation of commerce, by the latter: but still it will be found, that the general representation of affairs made by both is just the same. I admit that two or three more such dismemberments of China are recorded in her Annals, as having taken place at long intervals from each other: but, surely, this is only another instance of a trick of which I have already established a remarkable example, and which has been frequently resorted to by the mandarins, in the composition of those Annals; namely, their repeating the same train of events, with some variety of colouring, in different parts of their history, to help them to fill up the prodigious length of time through which they have extended it. Still further, I admit that the identity of the periods alluded to by both authors, would be more completely made out, if the state of things which Confucius is constantly bewailing, had been traced by him as far back as the rebellion of 877, in which it originated. But, on the other hand, the circumstance of his having failed to do so, does not by any means defeat the proposed identification; and may be reconciled with it in various ways, two of which it will suffice here to mention. In the first place, though it is questioned whether the Chun-tsew was written as a history of *Loo* in particular (which comprised only the territories that now belong to Yen-tchou)^a, or of that and the adjoining petty states

^a This city is represented by P. Martini, in his *Atlas Sinensis*, as only the second one of six between which he partitions the province of Shan-tung (written by him Xantung); the ancient kingdom of *Loo* was, therefore, in all proba-

in common,^a it was certainly not intended for one of China at large; and, consequently, the author may have omitted an account of the rebellion in question, as alien from his subject. In the second place, he may have lived long enough after this rebellion to have all the particulars of it effaced from the memory

bility less than a sixth part of this province. Dr. Marshman gives us the following information upon the same subject: "*Loo* is not the present kingdom of *Laou*, but, according to the Imperial Dictionary, a part of the extensive province of *San-tong*, which, in D'Anville's '*Nouvel Atlas de la Chine*,' printed at Amsterdam, 1785, lies to the south-east of Peking. *Loo* and the other provinces around seem at this time [that is, in the time of Confucius] to have formed small independent states governed by their own princes, over whom the emperor's authority was little more than nominal."—*Life of Confucius*, note to p. 1.

^a Nothing, surely, could more strongly indicate the extreme obscurity of the Chun-tsew and vagueness of its style, than this circumstance; which is attested by P. du Halde as follows: "—plusieurs veulent que ce soit l'histoire du royaume de *Lou*, qui étoit la patrie de Confucius, et qui est présentement la province de Chan-tong: d'autres prétendent que c'est un abrégé de ce qui s'est passé dans le divers royaumes qui partageoient la Chine, avant que Tsin-tchi-hoang les eût tous réunis sous une même monarchie."—*Description de l'Empire de la Chine*, &c. tom. ii. p. 317. In fact, the only parts of this history that are written with the least degree of precision, are the dates, by means of which it is now made to extend through the space of 241 years. But those dates have, I submit, been proved beyond a doubt to be modern interpolations; and, if any confirmation of the proof already given were wanted, it would be found in the marked difference, with respect to clearness of style, between the detached passages in which they are contained, and the rest of the work. It is to be remarked that, in the quotation just adduced, the little kingdom of *Loo* is represented about six times as large as it really was; and the joint extent of it, and the contiguous states noticed in the Chun-tsew, by being equalized to the whole of China, is probably magnified beyond their real size in fully as great a proportion. The unhappy situation of public affairs, it may be also observed, which existed in the time of Confucius, is alleged in this quotation, to have lasted till the age of Che-whang-te of the Tsin dynasty, the fabulous builder of the Chinese wall. Now, however I may differ from the authors here alluded to, as to the period when the barrier in question was erected, I quite agree with them, and indeed with all, as far as I know, who have written on the subject, in placing the life of the Chinese sage before that period, and at no great distance from it.

of the Chinese : the intervention of one or two centuries, it is evident, would be quite sufficient to produce this effect, in times of great disturbance and calamity, and more particularly in times when alphabetic writing was but just coming into use, and employed only in subordination to an ideographic method of recording events. A good deal might be urged in favour of the latter explanation ; and, on the supposition of its being well-founded, the assertion that the odes of the *She-king* were very old when Confucius united them in the same compilation, if understood as not extending the estimate of their age at that time beyond two hundred years, is likely to be true. As no dependance, however, can be placed on Chinese statements, when unsupported by other evidence, I laid but little stress on this assertion when I first adverted to it ; but now, I conceive, it will be found worthy of some attention. Thus, while a thousand years have, from a variety of considerations, been fixed on, as the extreme limit to the antiquity of the Chinese sage, the combination of external and internal evidence just brought forward, tends to reduce the remoteness of the time in which he lived, to the length of eight or nine centuries. In another way also we may arrive at the same conclusion : the condition of China described by the Arabian writer as commencing in the year 877, terminated certainly before the age of Jenhiz-khan (who, in his invasion of that country, is represented in every account of it that has reached us, as having had to contend, not with the separate forces of a number of small disunited kingdoms, but with large armies raised in one extensive empire) ; if, therefore, the two authors refer, as has been shown most likely, to the same calamitous state of affairs, though perhaps to different stages of that state, we can scarcely go a hundred years wide of the mark, in placing the life of Confucius near the centre of the interval here pointed out, that is, about the middle of the eleventh century.

But the works on which the authorized Chinese Annals are grounded, must have been, the greater portion of them, fabricated or remodelled in more recent times ; and the age of

those Annals, or at least the period when they were drawn up in their present form, can be determined, by means of their contents, with some approximation to exactness. Although the French translation of this history supplies an account of the use of gunpowder, as early as at the siege of Cai-fong-fu in 1232, yet there is not, I trust I have satisfied the reader, the slightest allusion to this combustible in the original work; neither does any mention occur in it of printing; and from those omissions, combined with the well-known fact, of its being the constant practice of the Chinese to lay claim to the credit of every invention they become acquainted with, it may, I submit, be clearly inferred, that the records under inquiry were published, before either gunpowder or printing were introduced into China, that is, before events took place that were very close to the year 1500, and of which the earlier may, possibly, have been somewhat anterior to that year. On the other hand, as they contain the fiction of the Chinese wall having been erected above two thousand years ago, they could not have been written till after that wall had contracted some appearance of antiquity;—a structure which, it has been proved almost to a certainty, was not begun till after 1420, and which, therefore, considering its magnitude, was in all probability not finished before 1450. Allowing, then, to the mandarins the highest imaginable degree of assurance, we yet can hardly suppose them to have ventured on spreading the story of the prodigious age of this celebrated barrier before 1480. Thus boundaries of time are established, on both sides of the epoch when the Chinese Annals received their present form; and this epoch is found to lie somewhere within the very narrow compass of the twenty years immediately preceding the end of the fifteenth century.

The introduction of printing into the Celestial Empire soon after the Annals, now in the hands of the Chinese public, were framed, must have greatly contributed to render them more permanently legible, by checking the variation of the characters in which they are exhibited. But, on the other hand, this art

has, as it were,—to borrow an expression from its own province,—stereotyped certain blunders committed by the mandarins, in the composition of their, in other respects, “cunningly devised fable;”—blunders whose effects they have since in vain endeavoured to get rid of, and which afford material assistance in the exposure of their deceit. The prodigious number and variety of works published in support of this history, with false dates, and under the names of imaginary authors, which must, nearly all of them, have been fabricated within the comparatively short space of the last three hundred and fifty years, serve to give a forcible idea of the industry and ingenuity of the Chinese; but at the same time present to us a melancholy picture of the system of fraud and imposition in which their learned men have been constantly engaged. Indeed, the literary, as well the moral condition of this people, is most deplorable; but a brighter prospect at present appears to open to their view. They are not strongly attached to any of the forms of Paganism that are tolerated in their country; and it is chiefly by the onerous burden of their ideographic system that they are excluded from communication with civilized nations, and debarred from the light of Christianity. But they by no means participate in the feelings which have induced their government to lay this burden on them, and would gladly be relieved from its pressure. For the sake of humanity, then, it is to be hoped that British influence may become predominant in China, and be directed, among other improvements, to the diffusion there of an European method of writing; which might, by the addition of accents and some other marks, be easily adapted to the Chinese language. A way would thus be prepared for the numerous millions of that extensive empire, directly leading to increased intercourse with Europeans,—to increased civilization,—and to a more cordial reception of the blessings of true religion.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE SYLLABIC WRITING OF THE JAPANESE, AND THE
FICTITIOUS NATURE OF THEIR ANCIENT HISTORY.

THE JAPANESE MOST PROBABLY OF TARTAR AND CHINESE DESCENT—
CHINESE ORIGIN OF THE SHAPES OF THE JAPANESE LETTERS—
INDIAN ORIGIN OF THE JAPANESE SYLLABARY—SOME EXAMPLES
OF MIXED KATA-KANA AND CHINESE WRITING—LIMIT TO THE AGE
OF THE JAPANESE ANNALS—A BRIEF SPECIMEN OF JAPANESE HIS-
TORY—THE EARLY PART OF THIS HISTORY ENTIRELY FICTITIOUS
AND UNFOUNDED.

ALTHOUGH the early history of the Japanese, like that of every other nation which had not in ancient times the benefit of alphabetic writing, is now utterly unknown, yet the leading distinction of countenance and the language belonging to this people afford some clue to their origin; and the combination of both criteria renders it most probable that they are descended partly from some of the Tartar hordes inhabiting the north-eastern coast of Asia, and partly from the Chinese. The resemblance they bear in the general cast of their features to the Chinese or Tartar face, is admitted by M. Klaproth; though, in attempting to trace out for them an independent origin, he attached more importance to subordinate differences of physiognomy. In an article of his upon the literature of the Japanese, he incidentally expresses himself upon the point before us, in the following terms: “L’archipel qui forme l’empire du Japon, est habité par un peuple qui, au premier abord, ressemble beaucoup aux Chinois, par la figure et l’extérieur. Cependant, en examinant avec soin ses traits caractéristiques, et en les comparant à ceux des Chinois, on parvient aisément à reconnaître ce qui les différencie, comme j’en ai fait l’expérience à la frontière russe et chinoise, où je voyais ensemble plusieurs individus

des deux nations. L'œil du Japonais, quoique presque aussi obliquement posé que celui du Chinois,^a est pourtant plus grand du côté du nez, et le milieu de sa paupière paraît tiré en haut, quand il est ouvert."—*Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, tom. iii. p. 22.

The mixed resemblance of the Japanese tongue to Chinese and to different Tartar dialects has been attested by M. Siebold, in a memoir he addressed to the Asiatic Society of Paris in 1829; and the inference he thence deduced, is stated as follows, in the report of a committee of the Society upon the merits of his paper: "M. de Siebold croit pouvoir prouver, par la comparaison des langues des Mandchoux, des Coréens, et des Aïno ou Kouriles, avec celle des Japonais, qu'il existe une parenté manifeste entre tous ces peuples, et que, par conséquent, le Japon a reçu vraisemblablement du continent de l'Asie sa population, laquelle fut postérieurement civilisée par des colonies chinoises et coréennes qui vinrent se mêler à elle."—*Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, tom. iii. p. 390. The examiners decided that our author did not make good his point; and, very possibly, it is such as cannot be settled upon philological grounds alone. But suppose those gentlemen had succeeded in showing, that his view of the case could not be established even upon any grounds, yet surely no one can seriously assent to their reasoning on the subject; which virtually amounts to this strange enthymem, that, because the precise way in which Japan was first peopled, can now no longer be ascertained, its primitive inhabitants must, therefore, have been, forsooth, *aboriginal*, that is, a race quite distinct from the rest of mankind, and which originated in the island itself. The committee, indeed, have thrown some obscurity over their conclusion, by defining *aborigines* to mean a people so long in a country that their origin cannot be traced: but the whole scope of their argument shows that they use the term in a different sense; for,

^a This oblique position of the eye is observable in the Tartars, as well as in the Chinese and Japanese; and appears to mark all three nations as descended, more or less immediately, from the same family or tribe.

otherwise, the result they come to would be identical with the premiss from which it is derived; and, besides, they admit that there may be some doubt about the existence of aborigines, about which there could be none, if the term was really employed by them with the signification which they ostensibly give it. But let us hear them in their own words: "Cependant, si l'on admet des aborigènes, si l'on donne ce nom au peuple qui a occupé un pays depuis les temps les plus reculés, ou jusqu'à l'époque de la première notion historique qui en existe, et si la langue de ce peuple n'offre aucune ressemblance avec celle d'une autre nation,^a alors tout contribue à faire prendre les Japonais pour des *aborigènes*; puisque ils ne montrent, sous aucun rapport,^b de la ressemblance avec les Kouriles, les Coréens, et les Mandchoux ou Tougouses, qui sont les nations les plus voisines de l'archipel du Japon."—*Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, tom. iii. pp. 403–4.

The conclusion come to in the above report, which was drawn up by M. Klaproth, is advanced by him more unequivocally in another work. In an Essay on the part of Japanese history that he admits to be fabulous, which is prefixed to his translation of the Annals of Japan (one of the series of books published under the auspices of the Oriental Translation Fund Committee, and which was printed at Paris in the year 1834), he pronounces the Japanese to be *autochthones*, or originally sprung from the very country they now inhabit;—an appellation which leaves no room for uncertainty as to his meaning. At

^a In the very same report it is stated as the assertion of M. Siebold, and not contradicted by the committee, that there are a great number of words the same in Japanese as in Chinese: "— quoique le japonais ait adopté un grand nombre de termes chinois, —" *Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, tom. iii. p. 387.

^b We have already seen it admitted elsewhere by M. Klaproth, who was one of the committee, that the Japanese have a great resemblance to the Chinese, which strikes the observer at the very first view; though it is afterwards found to be modified by differences which must be of a subordinate description, since they appear only upon closer inspection. But the prominent trait of this resemblance, namely, the oblique position of the eye, is common to all the nations above mentioned, as well as to the Chinese.

first, indeed, for the purpose, as it would appear, of avoiding as much as possible to startle the reader, he expresses this decision only as a conjecture. “On s’aperçoit facilement que les matériaux nécessaires pour résoudre avec quelque probabilité la question difficile de leur origine, manquent aux Japonais mêmes : il serait donc téméraire pour un Européen de vouloir aller plus loin qu’eux. Cependant, si l’on considère d’un côté la différence radicale entre la langue japonaise et la chinoise, et de l’autre le type tout-à-fait chinois de la civilisation actuelle du Japon, on peut conjecturer avec beaucoup de vraisemblance que ce pays, originairement habité par des *autochthones*, a été civilisé par des colonies chinoises, arrivées à différentes époques dans les provinces occidentales du Japon.”—*Histoire Mythologique des Japonais*, p. x. But after this prelude he converts his conjecture into very nearly a certainty, for a reason which is wholly unconnected with the main point, and has respect merely to the subordinate question, by what nation the inhabitants—whether *autochthones* or not—were first civilized. “En effet, la partie nord-est de l’empire n’a été civilisée que fort tard, relativement à celles de l’ouest et du midi. Ce fait, ainsi que plusieurs autres circonstances, paraissent appuyer la conjecture énoncée ci-dessus, et l’élever presque à la certitude.”—*Ibidem*. By such assertions and by such reasoning it is, that a particular class of savans endeavour to disprove the Scriptural account of the common origin of the whole human race.

The facts, however, which M. Klaproth communicates respecting the literature of the Japanese, are, when stripped of false colouring, entitled to attention; and, in the following short description of the graphic practice of this people, I avail myself chiefly of information which he, in an article already referred to, supplies from a Japanese work in mixed Chinese and Japanese writing, that was printed at Miyako,^a in 1703,

^a Miyako is the town in which the *Dairi* or ecclesiastical emperor resides, and is next in rank to Yedo, the residence of the *Koubo*, or military commander-in-chief, an officer to whom the sovereign power in Japan has for some time past been virtually transferred.

and is entitled *Sitsi i ro fa te fon*. The title he translates "Manuel des sept alphabets," and thus describes the book itself:—"C'est un petit volume *in-folio* très-curieux, qui contient en effet sept syllabaires, en tête desquels est placé celui qu'on appelle *fira kana*; puis viennent les six autres exprimés par des caractères chinois un peu cursifs, appelés généralement *yamato kana*, qui représentent des syllabes japonaises. A droite de ces derniers, on lit, en japonais et en *fira kana*, la signification qu'ils ont en chinois. Ce grand syllabaire est suivi des noms de nombre également septuples, des caractères cycliques, et du syllabaire *kata kana*. Mais ce qui donne à ce petit ouvrage un intérêt beaucoup plus grand, c'est une introduction en chinois et en japonais, contenant l'histoire de l'origine des différentes écritures usitées au Japon. Comme le propriétaire de ce livre ne voulait pas s'en dessaisir, je fis un extrait de cette introduction, que j'ai l'honneur de communiquer à la Société Asiatique, et que je fais précéder par quelques observations sur l'origine de la civilisation japonaise."—*Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, tom. iii. pp. 21–2. Here I should apprise the reader that, by the different systems mentioned in this passage, he is to understand merely seven or eight different sets of letters belonging to one and the same syllabary; as the Japanese have but one, though variously written, it being the very same series of syllabic powers that is denoted by each of the different sets of letters. This, indeed, is admitted by our author in one part of his memoir; where he observes that the Japanese employ two different kinds of writing, namely, the Chinese ideagrams and a syllabary composed of forty-seven syllables, which are represented by different series of signs: "On sait que les Japonais se servent à présent de deux genres d'écriture, c'est-à-dire qu'ils emploient, ou les caractères ideographiques des Chinois, ou un syllabaire composé de quarante-sept syllabes, qui sont représentées par diverses séries de signes."—p. 25. But throughout the rest of the Essay he, for a reason that shall presently be explained, expresses himself upon this subject, so as to convey the notion that they had seven or eight syllabaries instead of only one.

The first writing of the Japanese, and which, as may be perceived from the last quotation, they still make use of along with their syllabic letters, was the graphic system of the Chinese : and as, like their masters, they never are at a loss for a name or a date, they state precisely, under which of their *Daïri*, or ecclesiastical emperors, this system was introduced into Japan ; by whom, during the same reign, their knowledge of it was completed ; and the very day of the month of the year in which their sapient instructor was sent for. “ Thus M. Klaproth, under the guidance of his Japanese manual, tells us : “ Jusqu’au temps du 16^e. *Daïri*, nommé *O zin ten ô*, les Japonais n’avaient pas d’écriture ; toutes les ordonnances et les proclamations se faisaient de vive voix. Ce ne fut que sous le règne de ce prince qu’on commença à se servir des caractères chinois nommés *sin zi* et plus tard *kan zi*, c’est-à-dire, lettres de *Thsin* et de *Han*. *O zin ten ô* envoya aussi, en 284 [de J. C.], le 6.^e jour de la 8.^e lune, une ambassade dans le royaume de *Fakou saï*, en chinois *Pe tsi*, qui existait alors dans la partie sud-ouest de la Corée, pour y chercher des hommes instruits et en état de repandre la civilisation et la littérature de la Chine dans son pays. Cette ambassade ramena avec elle le célèbre *Vo nin*, en chinois *Vang jin*, qui remplit parfaitement l’objet que le *Daïri* se proposait.”—pp. 25–6. But here a difficulty arises that, it might naturally be supposed, would embarrass an author who maintained the perfect truth of both the Chinese and the Japanese Annals. The Chinese, who had, it seems, the use of writing before, or at any rate very soon after the Flood, began to colonize Japan exactly 944 years previously to the epoch specified in the above extract. “ L’histoire véritable du Japon ne commence qu’en 660 avant notre ère, avec *Sin mou*, ou le guerrier divin, qui est regardé comme le fondateur de la monarchie. C’est de lui que descend la famille des *daïri*, que nous sommes accoutumés à appeller *empereurs ecclésiastiques*. Son nom indique un conquérant étranger. Il civilisa les barbares d’*Akitsou no sima* : c’était l’ancien nom du Japon *Sin mou* et ses trois frères, qu’on dit avoir régné avant lui,

étaient vraisemblablement d'origine chinoise Après la première colonie chinoise venue au Japon sous la conduite du *guerrier divin* et de ses frères, plusieurs autres y sont arrivées. L'ancien mélange des habitans primitifs du Japon avec les Chinois se manifeste aussi par une civilisation tout-à-fait semblable, et principalement par la multitude des mots chinois introduits dans la langue japonaise et défigurés par la prononciation."—pp. 23-4. So, it appears from one set of Annals, that the Chinese were, for 944 years, doing all they could to civilize Japan, but without teaching them how to write, and, consequently, without knowing how themselves; while in the other set it is recorded that, during the whole of the same time, they were fully acquainted with this art. Now, how is it attempted to get rid of this contradiction? Simply by the gratuitous assumption that the Chinese had, all the while, the benefit of writing, but that they withheld it from the very party they were making every effort in their power to civilize; because, forsooth,—the acquisition would have been of no use to the Japanese! "Il ne paraît pas que les colonies chinoises qui anciennement se sont fixées au Japon, y aient répandu l'usage de l'écriture, qu'elles gardaient peut-être comme un secret utile à elles seules;—" pp. 24-5. Did M. Klaproth really imagine, that the difficulty in question could be removed by such an explanation?

Each of the sets of letters appropriated to the Japanese syllabary is composed, either of Chinese ideagrams restricted to denoting the mere sounds of the words by which a Japanese would express their meaning, or of derivatives from such characters more or less simplified in shape, and employed in the same manner. After the train, therefore, of the powers of this system was once settled, the whole of what M. Klaproth and his Japanese authority call the invention of a syllabary, consisted merely in selecting from Chinese writing any series of characters that would be read in Japanese by words constituting the required series of articulate sounds; and in subsequently leaving

out such parts of the forty-seven letters thus selected, as were in practice found unnecessary for the purpose of distinguishing them as syllabic signs from each other. As far, then, as depends upon this process, their form affords some indication of their age, the characters having become simpler, according as they were longer in use, before they were fixed in their present shapes; but it is by no means certain, that there are not other causes also by which their appearance has been affected. For instance, the *man-yo-kana* set of letters is composed of Chinese characters quite unchanged; yet it does not thence follow that this must be the series of latest construction, as the Japanese may possibly have had some reason or fancy for having never from the first made any alteration in the shapes of its elements. M. Siebold has remarked that the characters of this set may have been selected for the sounds of the words by which they are read in Chinese, as well as in Japanese; which would imply that, so far, the two languages were nearly identical. But his observation must be understood only in a qualified sense: our author adduces the two following instances in which it does not hold good. “Les caractères chinois qui composent ce syllabaire, ainsi que tous ceux des autres, ne représentent toujours le son chinois des mots qu’ils désignent; ainsi *kiang*, fleuve, en chinois, représente la syllabe *ye*, qui, en japonais, a la même signification; de même *niu*, femme, en chinois, est employé pour désigner le mot japonais *me*, qui signifie aussi femme.^a M. Siebold se trompe en disant: ‘Characteres *manjoo kana* mere sunt chinenses, in ore chinensi eundem quoque fere sonum, quem in alphabeto japonico imitentur, sonantes.’”—Note à p. 37. The set of letters called the *kata-kana* series, is the most important of all, as being that which is always employed

^a The meaning of the above sentence may, perhaps, be more easily understood, when expressed in the following manner:—The powers of the Japanese syllabary, *ye* and *me*, are, in the *man-yo-kana* series of letters, represented respectively by the Chinese characters for “a great river” and “a woman,” which are read in Japanese by the words *ye* and *me*, but by very different words in Chinese.

in combination with the Chinese symbols ; and the next in importance is the *fira-kana* series, which is the principal one of those applied to writing Japanese, without any admixture of ideographic signs.

The syllabary under examination is called the *I-ro-fa* from its first three powers ; and is always repeated, or rather chanted, by the Japanese in the following order ; in which, likewise, it is constantly written, no matter by which of its different sets of letters it may be denoted : the powers are placed after the Japanese manner (which is the same as that of the Chinese), in vertical columns ; but the order of the columns is inverted, to accommodate them to the European mode of reading. The vowel part of each syllable is to be pronounced as in French, except *u*, which is intended to denote the pure sound of the fifth vowel, and is here substituted for *ou*, the French combination employed for that sound.

<i>i</i>	<i>tsi</i>	<i>yo</i>	<i>ra</i>	<i>ya</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ye</i>
<i>ro</i>	<i>ri</i>	<i>ta</i>	<i>mu</i>	<i>ma</i>	<i>sa</i>	<i>fi</i>
<i>fa</i>	<i>nu</i>	<i>re</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>ke</i>	<i>ki</i>	<i>mo</i>
<i>ni</i>	<i>ru</i>	<i>so</i>	<i>yi</i>	<i>fu</i>	<i>yu</i>	<i>se</i>
<i>fo</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>tsu</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>ko</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>su</i>
<i>fe</i>	<i>wa</i>	<i>ne</i>	<i>wo</i>	<i>ye</i>	<i>mi</i>	
<i>to</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>ku</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>si</i>	

Nothing, surely, could more strongly indicate the non-invention of this system by the Japanese, than the extremely confused way in which its terms are huddled together. The invention of a syllabary, it is evident, would require some analysis of the articulate sounds of the human voice ; and this again would necessarily lead to some regularity of arrangement : the order, indeed, of the first terms would be accidental, but whatever that order might be, it would be preserved through the remainder of the series. Thus, supposing, the above syllabary to have been arrived at by means of invention, its powers, instead of constituting the medley they now do, would be found placed in some such order as that which follows.

<i>i</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>ye</i> ^a	<i>u</i>
<i>ri</i>	<i>ro</i>	<i>ra</i>	<i>re</i>	<i>ru</i>
<i>fi</i>	<i>fo</i>	<i>fa</i>	<i>fe</i>	<i>fu</i>
<i>ni</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>na</i>	<i>ne</i>	<i>nu</i>
<i>tsi</i>	<i>to</i>	<i>ta</i>	<i>te</i>	<i>tsu</i>
—	<i>wo</i>	<i>wa</i>	—	—
<i>ki</i>	<i>ko</i>	<i>ka</i>	<i>ke</i>	<i>ku</i>
<i>yi</i>	<i>yo</i>	<i>ya</i>	<i>ye</i>	<i>yu</i>
<i>si</i>	<i>so</i>	<i>sa</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>su</i>
<i>mi</i>	<i>mo</i>	<i>ma</i>	<i>me</i>	<i>mu</i>

That the Japanese did not invent this syllabary, is still further proved by the circumstance of there being a great number of articulate sounds in their language which it does not contain; its defects in this respect being remedied only by means of very clumsy expedients, of which some illustration shall be given when I come to the description of their principal set of letters. But it is obvious that, if the I-ro-fa had been the fruit of independent invention, rather than of imperfect observation, the powers of investigation which gave it existence would have equally led to its extension, so as to render its elements immediately adequate to the wants of the inventors. It is, however, unnecessary to dwell longer on the negative evidence of the case; as that of a positive kind is quite decisive, not only as to the derivative nature of this system, but also as to the particular source from which it is more or less remotely descended.

M. Klaproth supplies us, from the testimony of his Japanese author, with the following proof of the Sanscrit origin of the I-ro-fa:—"Voici ce que l'auteur du *Setsi i ro fa te pon* dit sur l'origine du syllabaire *fira kana*: 'La chanson de l'*I ro fa* (car on nomme ainsi le syllabaire, parce qu'on le récite en chantant) se compose de quarante-sept lettres. Les douze premières, de-

^a The anomaly of *ye* being placed among the vowels ought not to surprise an English reader; as, in his own practice, he commits just the same irregularity with respect to the vowel *u*; which he always names, when by itself, and generally pronounces in combination with other letters, as the syllable *yu*.

The *I-ro-fa*, or Japanese Syllabary,
written in the *Kata-kana* Character.

Plate VII

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ア	a	エ	ye	イ	i	ヲ	o	ウ	u
ハ	fa	ヘ	fe	ヒ	fi	ホ	fo	フ	fu
カ	ka	ケ	ke	キ	ki	コ	ko	ク	ku
マ	ma	メ	me	ミ	mi	モ	mo	ム	mu
ナ	na	子	ne	ニ	ni	ノ	no	ヌ	nu
ラ	ra	レ	re	リ	ri	ロ	ro	ル	ru
サ	sa	セ	se	シ	si	ソ	so	ス	su
タ	ta	テ	te	チ	tsi	ト	to	ツ	tsu
ワ	wa					オ	wo		
ヤ	ya	エ	ye	井	yi	ヨ	yo	ユ	yu

N^o1 又 *Pa* 又 *Houm*
ou ou
Fa *Houng*.

名ナ假カ片カ N^o2

備ビ吉キ N^o4 仁ニ王ヲ N^o3

師シ大ダイ法フ弘ヲ N^o5

字ジ梵シ N^o8 命ニヤウ護ユ N^o6

記キ本シ日ニ繡シ N^o7

puis l'i jusqu'à l'o, furent faites par le bonze *Go mioo*, et les trente-cinq autres, depuis *va* jusqu'à *sou*, y furent ajoutées par *Ko bo daï si*. Ils les firent ainsi pour se conformer aux *fan zi*, ou caractères de l'Inde, qui se composent de douze *mata* ou voyelles, et de trente-cinq *tei mon* ou consonnes.'"—p. 31. M. Klaproth corroborates this evidence by remarking that the word made use of by his Japanese witness to express vowels, is of Sanscrit origin. "Le mot *mata* est le sanscrit **मात्र** *mātra*, qui signifie *mesure*^a et ensuite *voyelle*; car les voyelles brèves sont appelées, par les grammairiens hindous, **एकमात्र** *ekamātra*, ou d'une mesure, et les longues, **द्विमात्र** *dwimātra*, ou de deux mesures."—*Ibidem*. In further corroboration of the Sanscrit origin of this syllabary I have to add, that the Japanese sometimes make use in their writing of corrupted Deva-nagari characters, mixed with their own letters. M. Klaproth gives examples of three such characters employed in writing the first syllables respectively of three Japanese names; upon which he makes the following explanatory observations: "*Koubo daï si* [the imaginary personage to whom the arrangement of the last thirty-five powers of the I-ro-fa is attributed] a beaucoup de temples et de sanctuaires au Japon. On voit encore aujourd'hui dans le district de *Fira so*, province de *Yamato*, trois *ike* ou étangs que ce saint homme a fait creuser. Ils sont appelés *A-iké*, *Fa-ike*, et *Houn-ike*. Les premières syllabes des noms ne s'écrivent pas en caractères japonais ou chinois, mais en lettres *dévanagari* corrompues, telles qu'on les emploie au Japon, savoir [a copy of the line which should here follow, containing the three examples in question, is given in Plate IX. No. 1]."—Note à p. 34. In fine, the channel through which

^a This Sanscrit word obviously appears, from its sound and meaning, to be derived from *μέτρα*; and affords an instance of the contrivance by which the Brahmans rendered their sacred language at first unintelligible to the Hindu public; namely, by introducing into it foreign terms. Here it should not be overlooked, that the circumstance of their making choice of a Greek word to express the meaning in question, serves to indicate, with a high degree of probability, the source from which they derived their notions of metre and metrical poetry.

instruction in this syllabary reached Japan, is found from other Japanese works, to have been, what might be anticipated, a Buddhistic one. M. Klaproth gives, from a Dictionary which he styles “la grande Encyclopédie japonaise,” a translation of a biographic note respecting the above-mentioned Ko bo daï si, from which I select the following extract: “A l’âge de vingt ans, il reçut le titre de *ko kai*, ou de *mer du vide*, et en 802 [that is, in the year of the Japanese chronological system which corresponds to this one of our era], celui de *Ko bo daï si*, c’est-à-dire, *le grand maître qui répand la loi*. A l’âge de trente ans, il fut envoyé en Chine et s’embarqua sur un vaisseau chinois: il arriva dans ce pays l’année suivante, dans le temps de l’empereur Te tsoung de la dynastie des Thang. Il y étudia la doctrine de Bouddha sous la direction du bonze *Hoei ko*, retourna au Japon au bout de trois ans, et habita dans le temple de la montagne *Maki no yama*, dans la province d’*Izoumi*.”—p. 33.

The reader may now easily penetrate the motive which induced M. Klaproth to confound the I-ro-fa with its different sets of letters, and thereby give it the fallacious appearance of a great number of different syllabaries. He could not deny the Indian origin of a certain system of syllabic powers employed by the Japanese; and, therefore, to support his theory of the independent invention of alphabets by the example of this people, he was compelled to have recourse to the manœuvre of representing their syllabary of admitted foreign extraction, as only one out of many they had, and that too not their oldest one. For the fira-kana set of letters, or, as he calls it, the fira-kana syllabary, to which he would have us confine the very curious piece of Japanese evidence he has adduced upon this subject, is reputed to be of less age than the kata-kana set; and probably is so in reality, as its use is applied to a more recent state of Japanese writing, in which the aid of Chinese ideagrams is dispensed with. But on reverting to his own translation of the passage in question, which has been already quoted, it will be seen that the Japanese author, in attesting the Hindu origin of

the I-ro-fa, does not make the slightest allusion to any of the different sets of characters by which it is represented, but restricts his testimony exclusively to the essential part of this syllabary, the series of its powers. It is true that he mentions letters; he does so, however, in reference, not to their shape, but to their powers; and shows those powers to be in a great measure the same as at present; for he specifies their number to be forty-seven, and *i*, *o*, *va* or *wa*, and *su*, to be respectively the first, twelfth, thirteenth, and forty-seventh of the system. Thus the specious colouring which M. Klaproth has thrown over this subject, is entirely removed; and it is proved from the evidence of the Japanese themselves,—not that they invented several syllabaries, and one at least, before they derived any alphabetic instruction from an Indian source,—but that they possessed only a single one altogether, the produce of very imperfect observation of a foreign model that reached them through the same channel, as it did the Chinese, namely, through the priests of Buddha. The particulars, indeed, of this evidence relative to names and dates are entitled to no attention; but its general purport with regard to the derivative nature of the I-ro-fa, supported as it is by a great variety of circumstances, and given in direct opposition to the dictates of national vanity, may, I conceive, be securely relied on.

The passage translated by M. Klaproth, which supplies the chief part of the above testimony, deserves notice in another respect also; as it strongly illustrates the extreme ignorance of the Japanese with regard to the nature of an alphabet, and their consequent utter incompetence to form one without a model, by their own unaided efforts. In the passage in question, which is taken from a formal treatise on the subject, a learned author of their nation represents all the first twelve powers of the system before us, namely, *i*, *ro*, *fa*, *ni*, *fo*, *fe*, *to*, *tsi*, *ri*, *nu*, *ru*, *o*, to be vowels! It is, however, to be recollected that the Hindus, from whom their alphabetic instruction is remotely derived, betray scarcely less ignorance on this point, by classing among the

vowels *rĭ*, *rī*, *lĭ*, *lī*, *ang*, *agh*. In the same passage, our Japanese author, besides confounding consonants with syllables, and so far exposing a degree of imperfect acquaintance with the matter which extends in common to, I believe, all the Oriental nations that have alphabets, commits the extravagant blunder of placing *a* and *u* in his list of consonants !

Here it may be amusing to consider the way in which M. Klaproth expresses himself respecting the first acquisition of syllabic writing by the Japanese. “ Depuis le temps de *Vo nin* [the person already mentioned as the instructor of the Japanese in the use of Chinese ideagrams about the end of the third century] jusqu’à nos jours, les signes idéographiques de la Chine sont restés en usage chez les Japonais : ainsi que la langue chinoise, ils sont principalement employés dans les ouvrages savans ; mais cela n’empêche pas que leur connoissance ne soit répandue dans tout le Japon. Cependant, comme la construction de la langue japonaise diffère sensiblement de celle des Chinois, et comme les mêmes caractères chinois out souvent plusieurs significations, on s’aperçut bientôt qu’on manquait d’un moyen de parer à cet inconvénient ; *on inventa donc*, dans la première moitié du huitième siècle, un syllabaire formé de portions de caractères chinois, qu’on appela, pour cette raison, *kata-kana*, c’est-à-dire, *moitiés de lettres* ou de signes de denomination.”—pp. 27–8. “ — la tradition vulgaire en attribue *l’invention* à l’illustre *Kibi* ;—” p. 29. In this extract we are gravely told that the Japanese wanted a syllabary ; and, *therefore*, they *invented* one. It is just in like manner, and with as little foundation in truth, that our author observes, in a passage quoted in the preceding volume from him respecting the Koreans, that they *invented* an alphabet without any delay (ils ne tardèrent pas d’en inventer un), *because* their language was capable of being written with one. Thus it is first tacitly assumed that these savage nations had the power of inventing alphabets ; whence it is deduced,—most satisfactorily of course,—that they actually did invent systems of the kind as soon as they had occasion for such aid ; and this deduction is, forsooth, to

stand good against the clear proofs of its fallacy, which the direct examination of each case fully supplies. The rapidity of the invention, by the way, is rather oddly verified in the last extract; in which the writer, according to his own showing, makes a space of above four centuries to intervene between the perception of the want, on the part of the Japanese, and their attainment of the remedy.

The formation of the *fira-kana* series,—which, though it includes the same number of letters as the *kata-kana* set, yet constitutes, it seems, quite a different system (*un autre syllabaire*),—is thus described by M. Klaproth: “Un an après la mort de *Kibi*, naquit le fameux bonze *Ko bo*, auteur d’un autre syllabaire, qui fut définitivement employé à écrire la langue japonaise seule, sans qu’il fût nécessaire d’avoir recours aux caractères chinois. Ce syllabaire, qui porte le nom de *fira kana*, ou d’écriture égale ou étendue, se compose, ainsi que le *kata kana*, de quarante-sept signes, dérivés de caractères chinois,—” p. 30. *Ko bo*, mentioned in previous quotations under the fuller denomination of *Ko bo dai si*, is here modestly called only the *author* or *framer* of the *fira-kana* syllabary, which is admitted to have been derived from a foreign model through the aid of Buddhistic instruction; but, as a salvo upon the opposite side of the question, it is to be borne in mind that *Ki bi* was the *inventor* of the older alphabetic system of the Japanese above half a century before.

In the upper part of Plate IX. may be seen, copied from the text of M. Klaproth’s Essay, the *I-ro-fa* written in the *kata-kana* character; but its letters are arranged, for the convenience of the reader, not in their Japanese order, but according to that which the elements of their powers hold in the English alphabet. In the lower part of the Plate, under the line marked No. 1, which has been already referred to, are given, from the notes of the same Essay, some examples of the use made of these letters in combination with Chinese symbols; which have been selected chiefly with a view to illustrate the inadequateness of the system to the designation of the sounds of the Japanese lan-

guage, and the clumsy expedients by which it is attempted to remedy this class of its defects. But before I proceed to the consideration of those examples, I shall offer a few observations on the syllabary itself, as represented by the kata-kana letters. In the first place, then, the shapes of these letters, compared with each other, betray as much ignorance of the nature of the system, on the part of its employers, as does their strange derangement of its powers. The characters in the uppermost horizontal line, though they, with one exception, denote simply vowels, are not in the least more simple than those under them, which all stand for complex sounds; and there is nothing whatever to indicate, either that the letters in any one of the other horizontal lines express syllables commencing with the same consonant, or that those in each vertical line represent such as end with the same vowel. This remark, I should add, equally applies to all the different sets of letters with which the I-ro-fa is written; as far as can be judged from the Plate connected with M. Klaproth's Essay, which gives six, or from one in Kämpfer's work, which exhibits three of those sets. In the second place, Kämpfer, who quitted Japan in 1692, after having resided there for two years, exhibits the kata-kana letters for *fu*, *ke*, *ta*, *wo*, in very different shapes from those with which they are drawn by M. Klaproth; and, besides, includes two more in the system, with the powers *we* and *wu*. If, then, the accuracy of the older author can be depended on, not only the kata-kana series of characters, but also the I-ro-fa itself has undergone no slight alteration, even within the course of the last hundred and fifty years. In the third place, there are but four of the kata-kana letters that retain exactly their Chinese shapes, namely, *yi*, *mi*, *ne*, *tsi*; the originals of the rest are known, but I have not considered any delineation of them requisite for this brief sketch.

The examples under that which is marked No. 1, are to be read in like manner as all Chinese or Japanese writing that is ranged in horizontal lines, that is to say, from right to left. In No. 2 is presented to us the descriptive denomination *kata*

kana,^a written in two very different ways; one of which is more particularly intended to convey to a Japanese reader the meaning of the legend, and the other, the words by which that meaning is expressed in his native tongue. The three Chinese symbols in this example, to which are respectively assigned in Morrison's Dictionary the sounds *pëen kéa ming*, denote literally "fragments (or halves) of excellent letters;"—a description which is, in regard to the simplification of the Chinese characters, more or less applicable to every set of them with which the I-ro-fa is written, except the man-yo-kana set. Whatever tendency the language of the Chinese may have to a polysyllabic form, is effectually checked by their plan of education, in which five or six years are devoted to the business of fixing in the learner's memory a monosyllable for each character: but the waste of so much time spent in learning merely how to pronounce the characters is, in a great measure, saved to the Japanese, by means of their syllabary; and, in consequence, their use of the same ideographic system does not impose the same check upon their language. For instance, in the example before us they read the first symbol by the dissyllable *kata*, the letters for which are placed in a vertical line on the right side of this symbol, as a reference to the syllabary in the upper part of the Plate will at once show; and, though they read the other two ideagrams by single syllables, yet these two syllables compose only the one word *kana*.

The only letter that I can find used as a consonant in katakana writing, is a final *n*, the want of which in the syllabary is supplied, not by a modification of any of the letters whose powers commence with this articulation, but by the letter *si* deprived of one of its dashes. Thus, in No. 3, *Vo nin*, or (ac-

^a The words in Italics which, in this paragraph and the next, serve to show how the Japanese portions of the several examples are to be read, are quoted from M. Klaproth's Essay, and, therefore, should be understood as written after the French manner: when, in any instance, a second reading is added, it is the English one.

according to English orthography) *Wo nin*, the name given to the reputed importer of the Chinese graphic system into Japan, is written with the letters *wa*, *u*, *ni*, followed by *si*, altered in the way I have just mentioned. It is not to be charged as a fault to the I-ro-fa, that it includes no powers commencing with *l*; as this articulation does not occur in the Japanese language, any more than *r*, on the other hand, in Chinese. But there are at least a third of the Japanese articulate sounds not immediately represented in this syllabary; as, for instance, those commencing with *b*, *d*, *g*, *p*, or *z*; the general mode of supplying signs for which appears to be by the addition of two dashes to the letters of cognate powers. From the scanty materials, however, that have fallen within my reach, I cannot undertake to enumerate all the defects of the system, or to exemplify all the remedies made use of, and irregularities to be found in the application of those remedies; but must confine myself to a very slight illustration of the subject. In No. 4, *Ki bi*, the name of the fabled inventor of the Japanese syllabary in its oldest form, is placed before us, with the monosyllable *bi* denoted by the letter *fi* with two dashes over it. In No. 5, *Ko bo daï si*, the name, according to M. Klaproth, of the framer of the last thirty-five letters of the fira-kana series, has its elements, *ba* and *da*, expressed by the letters *fa* and *ta*, with the like addition of two dashes over each. By means of these alterations, the name in question is written *ko u*, *ba fu* (for *o*), *da i*, *si*; where the great irregularity is exposed of the letter *fu* used with the power of *o*;—an irregularity which appears to be of frequent occurrence in this writing, and probably originated in the similarity of the kata-kana letters *fu* and *o*. In No. 6, *Go mioo*, who, according to the same author, formed the first twelve letters of the fira-kana series, has his name written *go*, *mi ya u*; where the sign *go* is the letter *ko*, not with two dashes over it, but with an addition to its bottom line. The disadvantage of this irregularity is, that there is no distinguishing the character thus altered in shape, from the letter *yu*. In No. 7, *Sio nitsu pon gi*, the title of a Japanese historic work, has its last word *gi* expressed by the

letter *ki* with two dashes over it, and the preceding word *pon*, by the letters *fo* and *n* final, without any alteration of the former; whence, as far as an inference drawn from a single example can be depended on, it would appear that the Japanese, in their designation of articulate sounds, make no distinction between those which include the power of *f* and such as contain that of *p*. In No. 8, the legend *Fan zi*, that is, “India’s letters,” has *zi* written with the letter *si* altered by the addition of two dashes over it. The Chinese character here used to denote “letters,” is not that employed with the like signification in No. 2, but a symbol to which Dr. Morrison attaches the pronunciation *tsze*; so that the Chinese reading of the ideographic part of this example being *fan tsze*, the Japanese one is very nearly the same; as the Japanese words, according to the English mode of expressing their sounds, would be written *fan ze*. The order of those words, it may be noticed, is also Chinese, the governing word being placed last;—an arrangement which is very common in English, and has been preserved in the translation just given of this legend.

In the Japanese syllabic writing of later origin the aid of the Chinese symbols is dispensed with; but, notwithstanding this circumstance, it is still more imperfect than that which has been above exemplified; as, along with its principal ingredients the *fira-kana* characters, all the other sets of Japanese letters, except the *kata-kana* set, are promiscuously used; whence there are accumulated in it all the irregularities connected with those different sets, and it has, in consequence, become scarcely legible. The extreme imperfection of the present writing of the Japanese, and the difficulty of reading it, are admitted even by M. Klaproth. “Il est rare qu’on se serve seulement d’un de ces syllabaires, à l’exception du *kata-kana*: ordinairement on mêle les lettres de plusieurs ensemble; ce qui rend la lecture de ces sortes d’écrits d’autant plus difficile et pénible, que leur caractères, qui sont déjà assez confus, se trouvent encore liés ensemble par des traits qui leur sont étrangers.”—p. 39. Upon the same subject M. Abel-Remusat makes the following remarks:

“ Ils [les Japonais] ont fait un choix de certains mots [i. e. de certains caractères chinois] qu'ils sont convenus d'employer à l'expression des sons ; mais ce choix a d'abord été fait d'une manière peu judicieuse. Au lieu de prendre toujours le même caractère pour représenter la même prononciation, ils en ont pris cinq, six, huit, dix et même un plus grand nombre ; et, ce qui est encore pis, ils ont pris quelquefois le même caractère pour signe de deux ou trois prononciations différentes. Le plus souvent ils ont affecté aux caractères une prononciation analogue à celle que ceux-ci avoient en chinois. D'autres fois, ils leur en ont attribué une toute différente, conduits par des motifs qu'il seroit trop long d'exposer. Le nombre des caractères chinois qui ont été pris ainsi pour signes syllabiques, n'est pas déterminé ; mais il dépasse de beaucoup le nombre des syllabes simples que les Japonais avoient à rendre : celles-ci ne s'élèvent pas à plus de quarante-huit, et j'ai compté dans un seul ouvrage trois cent dix-sept caractères pour les représenter.”—*Mémoires de l'Institut, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres*, tom. viii. pp. 51-2. “ Il résulte de là un mélange bizarre de signes, de forme et même de nature diverses, et, au total, des difficultés si grandes dans la lecture, que je ne connois aucune écriture qui puisse, sous ce rapport, être comparée à celle des Japonais.”—*Ibidem*, p. 54. What a picture of the utter confusion which pervades the syllabic writing of the Japanese, and of their total ignorance of the principle of alphabetic construction, is here presented to us, by authors who have attempted to sustain their theory of the independent invention of alphabets by the example of this very people ! The part of the subject, however, to which I wish more especially to direct attention, is the continual disimprovement of the national writing of the Japanese which accompanies their use of the Chinese graphic system. Their mixed writing indeed, composed of Chinese symbols and katakana letters, may, perhaps, as well as that made up of symbols alone, remain in a comparative measure stationary ; but their purely national writing has from time to time become worse, according as each new set of letters has been added to the sys-

tem, and will probably continue to decline, till it has sunk to a state of absolute illegibility ;—a state which it appears from the above extracts to have already very nearly reached. Here, then, is laid before us, in addition to the instances previously adduced with the same bearing, a very striking example of the deteriorating effects of predominant ideographic practice upon alphabetic writing ;—an example which affords a further illustration of the fallacy of the notion, that the use of ideagrams could ever have led to the invention of an alphabet.

The Japanese Annals, translated by M. Klaproth, are entitled *Nipon o dai itsi ran*, that is, “Annals of the Emperors of Japan,” and appear to be, as far as they reach back, the authorized history of the empire. A comparison of part of their contents with some other documents, will enable us to arrive at a limit to the remoteness of the time when they were written. The oldest section of the narrative which can be verified by external testimony that deserves credit, is an account of an unsuccessful invasion of the country by a large army sent from China, under the command of Tartar generals, in the reign of Kublāi-khan. This account is given as follows in M. Klaproth’s version of the work :—“Le 2^e mois de la 1^{re} année du nengo *Ken zi* (1275),^a *To sei tsiou* (Thou chī tchoung)^b arriva en qualité d’ambassadeur des Môko, accompagné de quelques Coréens. Cette légation fut obligée de s’arrêter à Taï saï fou : seulement trois de ses membres purent aller à Kama koura ; ils n’obtinrent pas la permission de venir à Miyako. L’ambassadeur avait apporté une lettre ; on n’y répondit pas.”—*Annales des Empereurs du Japon*, p. 263. “Le 2^e mois de la 3^e année [du nengo *Kô an*] (1280), *To sei tsiou* (Thou chī tchoung), am-

^a The *nengo* are portions of time which the Japanese chronologists have fixed of arbitrary lengths, and distinguished by arbitrary names, in imitation of the *nien-hao* employed by the Chinese. Thus, for instance, the nengo *Ken zi* is appropriated to the three years from 1275 to 1277 inclusive, and *Kô an*, to the ten commencing in 1278.

^b In M. Klaproth’s translation, each Japanese name is generally printed in Italics, and followed by the corresponding Chinese one, inclosed within marks of parenthesis.

bassadeur des *Mô ko*, fut mis à mort. Aussitôt que les Môko en eurent reçu la nouvelle, ils rassemblèrent une armée considérable pour conquérir le Japon. Lorsqu'on fut informé de leurs préparatifs, le Daïri envoya des ambassadeurs à Izé et à plusieurs autres temples pour invoquer les dieux. *Fôsisio-no Toki moune*, qui résidait à Kama koura, ordonna que l'on rassemblât les troupes dans le Tsoukouzi, et expédia du Kwantô à Miyako de nombreux détachemens de soldats, pour garder le Daïri et le Tôgou, et les protéger contre tout danger. *Go Fouka kousano in* et *Kame yama-no in* furent conduits dans le Kwantô. Les deux gouverneurs de Miyako eurent ordre de se rendre dans le Tsoukouzi. A la 1^{re} lune de la 4^e année (1281), les Môko nommèrent *A si kan* (Ngo tsu han), *Fan boun ko* (Fan wen hou), *Kin to* (Hin tou) et *Kô sa kio* (Houng tchha khieou) généraux de leur armée, qui était forte de plus de cent mille hommes. Elle fut embarquée sur un nombre considérable de vaisseaux de guerre. *A si kan* tomba malade pendant la traversée, ce qui rendit le général en second *Fan boun ko* indécis sur le parti à prendre. Le 7^e mois, toute la flotte arriva au Japon à l'île de *Firando* (Phing hou), et passa de là à *Go riô san* (Ouloung chan); les troupes du Tsoukouzi étaient sous les armes. Le 1^{er} du 8^e mois, il s'éleva une tempête affreuse, les vaisseaux de la flotte des Môko furent engloutis dans la mer, ou fort endommagés. Le général *Fan boun ko* prit la fuite avec les autres généraux sur les vaisseaux qui avaient le moins souffert; personne n'a su ce qu'ils sont devenus. L'armée de cent mille hommes qui avait débarqué au-dessous de *Go riô san*, y resta errante sans vivres pendant trois jours; ces soldats avaient le projet de construire d'autres vaisseaux pour retourner en Chine. Le 7^e jour, l'armée japonaise les investit et les attaqua; on se battit avec acharnement, les Môko furent totalement défaits, trente mille hommes furent faits prisonniers, conduits à *Fa ka ta* (Pa kio tao), et mis à mort. On ne fit grâce qu'à *Kan siô* (Kan tchhang), *Bak saï* (Mo thsing) et *Go wan go* (Ou wan ou), qui furent envoyés en Chine pour y porter la nouvelle du sort de l'armée. La destruction d'une flotte si nombreuse par

la tempête fut considérée comme la preuve la plus évidente de la protection des dieux. On attribua principalement cet événement au dieu des vents, qui a son temple à Izé, et on lui manifesta la plus profonde vénération, pour avoir sauvé l'empire par l'anéantissement de la flotte mongole. *Kan siô* et ses compagnons retournèrent dans leur pays, et annoncèrent ce désastre au prince des Môko, qui était l'empereur *Zi zou kwô te* (Chi tsou houang ti),^a de la dynastie des *Ghen* (Yuan)."^b—*Ibidem*, pp. 264-5.

The authorized Chinese account of the matter is translated by P. de Mailla as follows:—"Houpilai-han méditoit depuis long-temps la conquête du Japon, et jusque-là toutes ses tentatives avoient été infructueuses. Une lettre qu'il avoit écrite d'un ton de maître au monarque Japonois avoit été reçue avec mépris: et sans craindre son ressentiment, quelques années après, Touchitchong, qu'il avoit envoyé dans ce royaume en qualité de son ambassadeur, avoit été exécuté avec toutes les personnes de sa suite. Houpilai-han, irrité, voulut en tirer vengeance: tranquille possesseur de la Chine, et jouissant d'une paix profonde dans la vaste étendue des royaumes soumis à sa puissance, il fit équiper, à la dixième lune [in the margin is written 1280], une flotte destinée contre le Japon, et elle devoit être montée par cent mille hommes commandés par le général Argan, Fanouenhou, Hongtchakieou et les plus braves officiers Mongous."—*Histoire Générale de la Chine*, tom. ix. pp. 405-6. "A la sixième lune [1281], Alahan [this is the Chinese pronunciation of the name above written *Argan*] partit pour l'expédition du Japon; mais à peine fut-il arrivé au port où il devoit s'embarquer qu'il mourut. Atahaï, qui fut nommé pour le remplacer, arriva trop tard; la flotte avoit déjà mis à la voile. A la hauteur de l'isle Ping-hou, elle fut battue d'une violente

^a Chi tsou, which is given above in a fuller form, is the Chinese name by which Kublaï-khan is distinguished in P. de Mailla's work: the proper name of this emperor, as it is pronounced by the Chinese, is in the same work written Houpilai-han.

^b Yuen, or Yuan, is the Chinese name for the Moguls: their proper name is pronounced, in Chinese, Mung ku, and in Japanese, Mo ko, or Mo ku ri.

tempête ; la plupart des barques échouèrent : les officiers choisissant les moins endommagées, s'en revinrent dessus, laissant dans cette isle plus de cent mille hommes. Ces soldats, se voyant abandonnés lâchement, élurent un chef et travaillèrent à couper des bois pour construire de nouvelles barques, dans l'intention de s'en retourner ; mais les Japonois ayant appris leur naufrage, firent une descente dans l'isle avec une puissante armée, et les passèrent au fil de l'épée. Ils n'épargnèrent que dix à douze mille soldats Chinois des provinces méridionales qu'ils firent esclaves. De toute cette formidable armée, à peine échappa-t-il trois personnes qui revinrent en Chine."—*Ibidem*, p. 409.

There is a statement upon the same subject, made by Marco Polo, which is translated by Marsden in the following terms :—
“ Of so great celebrity was the wealth of this island [Zipangu, i. e. Japan], that a desire was excited in the breast of the Grand Khan, Kublaï, now reigning, to make the conquest of it, and to annex it to his dominions. In order to effect this, he fitted out a numerous fleet, and embarked a large body of troops, under the command of two of his principal officers, one of whom was named Abbacatan, and the other, Vonsancin. The expedition sailed from the ports of Zaitun and Kinsai, and crossing the intermediate sea, reached the island in safety ; but, in consequence of a jealousy that arose between the two commanders, one of whom treated the plans of the other with contempt, and resisted the execution of his orders, they were unable to gain possession of any city or fortified place, with the exception of one only, which was carried by assault, the garrison having refused to surrender. Directions were given for putting the whole to the sword, and in obedience thereto the heads of all were cut off, excepting of eight persons, who by the efficacy of a diabolical charm, consisting of a jewel or amulet introduced into the right arm, between the skin and the flesh, were rendered secure from the effects of iron, either to kill or wound. Upon this discovery being made, they were beaten with a heavy wooden club, and presently died.

“It happened after some time, that a north wind began to blow with great force, and the ships of the Tartars which lay near the shore of the island, were driven foul of each other. It was determined, therefore, in a council of the officers on board, that they ought to disengage themselves from the land; and, accordingly, as soon as the troops were reembarked, they stood out to sea. The gale, however, increased to so violent a degree, that a number of the vessels foundered. The people belonging to them, by floating upon pieces of the wreck, saved themselves upon an island lying about four miles from the coast of *Zipangu*. The other ships, which not being so near to the land, did not suffer from the storm, and on which the two chiefs were embarked together with the principal officers, or those whose rank entitled them to command a hundred thousand or ten thousand men, directed their course homewards, and returned to the Grand Khan. Those of the Tartars who remained upon the island where they were wrecked, and who amounted to about thirty thousand men, finding themselves left without shipping, abandoned by their leaders, and having neither arms nor provisions, expected nothing less than to become captives or to perish; especially as the island afforded no habitations where they could take shelter and refresh themselves. As soon as the gale ceased, and the sea became smooth and calm, the people from the main island of *Zipangu* came over with a large force, in numerous boats, in order to make prisoners of these ship-wrecked Tartars; and having landed, proceeded in search of them, but in a straggling, disorderly manner. The Tartars, on their part, acted with prudent circumspection, and being concealed from view by some high land in the centre of the island, whilst the enemy were hurrying in pursuit of them by one road, made a circuit of the coast by another, which brought them to the place where the fleet of boats was at anchor. Finding these all abandoned, but with their colours flying, they instantly seized them; and pushing off from the island, stood for the principal city of *Zipangu*, into which, from the appearance of the colours, they were suffered to enter unmolested. Here they found few of

the inhabitants besides women, whom they retained for their own use, and drove out all others. When the king was apprized of what had taken place, he was much afflicted, and immediately gave directions for a strict blockade of the city, which was so effectual, that not any person was suffered to enter, or to escape from it, during six months that the siege continued. At the expiration of this time, the Tartars despairing of succour, surrendered upon the condition of their lives being spared. These events took place in the course of the year 1264. The Grand Khan having learned some years after, that the unfortunate issue of the expedition was to be attributed to the dissention between the two commanders, caused the head of one of them to be cut off, the other he sent to the savage island of Zorza,—” *Marsden’s edition*, pp. 570–1.

Upon comparing the statements which have been just brought together, there cannot, I apprehend, be any doubt of their truth, as far as they all agree, namely, in regard to the attempt of Kublai-khan to subdue the Japanese,—the destruction by a storm of great part of the fleet which conveyed the invading army,—the cowardly conduct of the generals in abandoning their troops,—and the disastrous issue of the expedition. But it may be worth while to consider a few of the particulars in which these statements differ from each other. There appears, then, no gasconading in the Chinese narrative (as it was written by persons who had not the least wish to celebrate the praises, or conceal the faults and failures of the Moguls); whereas there is a great deal in that of Marco Polo, who did not arrive in China till about ten years after the occurrence of the events referred to, and most probably took his description of them from the Tartar subjects of Kublai-khan, with whom he associated much more than with the Chinese. So far the Chinese account is preferable; but, in respect to dates, that of the Venetian author has evidently the advantage. He cannot, indeed, be depended on, in what he tells at second hand from the reports he heard from others, as he was just as credulous and superstitious as either the Tartars or Chinese; but it is now on all sides

allowed that he is fully entitled to credit, in the information he gives from his own knowledge ; and he certainly could not be ignorant of the time of an expedition of great magnitude and importance which so shortly preceded his arrival in the Celestial Empire ; that is, I mean, he could not be mistaken above a year or two, with regard to that time. To suppose that the expedition in question could have taken place, without his knowledge, in the very middle of his visit to China,—where the Chinese chronologists fix it,—is utterly inadmissible. Whether, then, it was, that the mandarins wished to excite an exaggerated notion of the length of time which Kublai-khan took to complete the subjugation of the brave Chinese (till after which he could not have spared troops for the invasion of Japan), or that their predecessors had not commenced to keep an accurate journal of any sort, as early as the age in which the disaster under consideration occurred, they evidently postdated this event, and have put it sixteen or seventeen years too late. Now, in this misrepresentation of the subject, the Japanese narrative agrees exactly with the Chinese one ; it exhibits, indeed, a more particular detail of dates, but still only such as result from, and tally with those given in the briefer statement ; from which, therefore, it must obviously have been transcribed, the few minor circumstances, added to the copy, having been introduced into it for the purpose of concealing the fact of its connexion with a foreign original. Hence it follows, nearly to a certainty, that the Japanese Annals, as far down as the latter part of the thirteenth century, must have been composed later than those of China, and, consequently, at some period subsequent to the end of the fifteenth century.

Having as yet quoted but an insulated passage from the Japanese Annals, I subjoin, as a further sample of the work, two reigns entire, taken very nearly at random from M. Klaproth's translation ; of which the first is chosen merely for its shortness, and the second as being that in which it is pretended, that the use of the arbitrary measures of time, called *nengo*, was introduced into Japan.

“ XXIII DAÏRI, SEÏ NEÏ TEN O

(de 480 à 484 de J. C.)

“ *Seï neï ten o* (Thsing ning thian houang) fils d’You riak, avait pour mère *Katsouragi-no mo fimé* (Kǒ tchhing han yuan), fille d’*Ousoura-no daïsin* (Yuan ta tchhin). A la mort de You riak, *Kibi-no Waka fimé* (Kǔ pi tchi yuan), belle-mère de Seï nin,^a voulut faire monter sur le trône son fils *Fosi kawa-no osi* (Sing tchhouan houang tsu) ; mais les deux premiers ministres *Otomo-no mourouya-no otsoura* (Chǔ yǒ ta lian) et *Yamato-no aya-no tsouka-no atasi* (Toung han kiũ tchǔ) firent mettre la mère et le fils à mort. Alors Seï neï fut proclamé Daïri. Il établit sa résidence à *Iwa ré-no mika gouri* (Phan yu oung lý) dans le Yamato, et chargea du gouvernement *Otomo-no moura-no otsoura* et *Fégouri-no matori* [the former of these two gentlemen appears to be one of the prime ministers above mentioned. What a loss it is, that the Chinese name of the latter has not been added !]. Il était né avec des cheveux blancs, ce qui lui fit donner le surnom de *Sira gano ten o* (Pě fǎ thian houang), ou le Daïri à cheveux blancs : il régna 5 ans, et mourut âgé de 42 ans.”—*Annales des Empereurs du Japon*, pp. 28-9.

“ XXXVII DAÏRI KO TOK TEN O

(de 645 à 654 de J. C.)

Nengo { *Tai kwa* (Ta houa), de 645 à 649,
 Fakoutsi (Pě tchi), de 650 à 654.

“ *Ko tok ten o* était frère cadet de l’impératrice *Kwo gok ten o*, qui, après la mort d’Irouka, avait résigné en sa faveur. Aux audiences qu’il donnait aux grands de l’empire, deux officiers *Odomo-no Naga toko* (Ta pan Tchang tǔ) et *Inougami-no*

^a Seï nin appears to have been inserted above, by a mistake of the printer, instead of Seï neï. But it is a matter of very little consequence, whether the person intended was the new emperor, or some one not previously mentioned.

Takepé (Ta chang Kian pou), se tenaient à sa gauche et à sa droite, un peu en avant du trône, ayant à la main un sabre nu et monté en or. Il honora du nom de *Kousofo-no mikoto* (Houang tsou mou tsoung) sa sœur, qui lui avait cédé le trône, et déclara *Naka-no oyé-no osi* son successeur. *Abé-no koura-no Fasi maro* fut nommé *Sadaïsin* (Tso ta tchhin) ou ministre de la gauche, et *Soga-no koura Yamata maro* eut la place d'*Oudaïsin* (Yeou ta tchhin) ou ministre de la droite. Ces deux emplois furent créés à cette époque : Kamatari devint *Nadaïsin* (Nei ta tchhin), et obtint la permission de porter un bonnet brodé ; on lui assigna des revenus considérables, et on le choisit pour régent de l'empire, en récompense des services qu'il avait rendus par la mort d'Irouka. Dans la suite, le Daïri lui accorda le chapeau de pourpre, et augmenta encore ses revenus.

“ *Taka noki-no Kouro maro* (Kao kiang Hiuan li) et *Zobin* (Seng min) étaient deux des savans de la cour les plus renommés ; ils avaient fait leurs études en Chine. *Ko tok ten o*, en montant sur le trône, introduisit le premier au Japon l'usage des *nengo* (nian hao), ou titres honorifiques des années du règne des empereurs. Il nomma les premières années du sien *Tai kwa* (Ta houa).

“ Il divisa l'empire en huit provinces, et régla le rang de tous les officiers du gouvernement, qu'il distingua par dix-neuf sortes de bonnets de formes et de couleurs différentes, d'après leurs rangs. Il résida dans un palais qu'il avait fait nouvellement construire sur le promontoire *Toyo saki* (Fung khi), à *Nagara* (Tchang ping), dans le voisinage de Naniwa.

“ La 2^e des années *Tai kwa* (646), le 1^{er} jour du 1^{er} mois, il fixa les jours des grandes audiences de la cour. Il établit, dans toutes les provinces de l'empire, des magistratures, des barrières et des relais de poste, divisa le pays d'après les montagnes et les rivières, plaça des gouverneurs dans chaque province, et fixa le salaire des porteurs. Il nomma des chefs dans les districts et les villages, et le premier fit enregistrer le nombre des maisons et des habitans de chaque lieu, les impôts à payer et le produit des terres. Il introduisit les revues de l'infanterie

et de la cavalerie; il ordonna de prendre dans chaque centaine de familles une belle femme pour le service du palais. Tous les ans il envoyait un officier dans chaque province pour examiner la conduite des gouverneurs. Il fit aussi construire des magasins et des arsenaux. L'Oudaïsin *Soga-no koura Yamata maro* fut chargé de l'avertir de toutes les fautes qu'il pourrait commettre dans le gouvernement. Ce fut lui qui inventa et introduisit en grande partie l'étiquette qu'on observe encore à la cour; Naka-no oyé-no osi et le régent Kamatari lui conseillèrent toutes ces mesures.

“ La 5^e des années *Tai kwa* (649), mourut le Sadaïsin *Abé-no koura-no Fasi maro*. Dans la même année, *Soga-no Fiouga* (Sou ngo Jÿ hiung), frère cadet de l'Oudaïsin *Soga-no koura Yamata maro*, ayant informé le Daïri que son frère aîné tramait une conspiration, l'empereur envoya des gens armés à sa demeure pour le mettre à mort. Yamata maro, quoiqu'il fût innocent, tua d'abord sa femme et ses enfans; puis il se donna la mort. Dans la suite, lorsque son innocence fut prouvée, son frère Fiouga fut exilé en Tsoukouzi, qui alors était un pays sauvage et desert. *Kose-no tok* (Kiu chi tĕ) fut fait Sadaïsin, et *Odomo-no naga tok* (Ta pan tchang tĕ) Oudaïsin; ils eurent le chapeau de pourpre.

“ L'année suivante (650), on envoya de la province de *Nagato* (Tchang men) au Daïri un faisan blanc; ce qui fut jugé d'un heureux présage. Le Daïri en fut très-content, et manda toutes les personnes de sa cour pour leur montrer cet oiseau. La pompe fut ce jour-là aussi brillante qu'au jour de l'an. On plaça le faisan dans une chaise à porteurs: ainsi élevé en l'air, quatre personnes le promenèrent de tout côté, puis le portèrent à l'appartement du Daïri, où il fut reçu par le Sadaïsin et l'Oudaïsin, qui le lui présentèrent. A cette occasion, le nengo fut changé en *Fakoutsi*, qui veut dire *Faisan blanc*. Le prince de Nagato fut avancé en rang d'un degré, et les prisonniers furent mis en liberté dans tout l'empire.

“ La 2^e des années *Fakoutsi* (651), le Daïri fit faire une image de Bouddha, haute de seize pieds, d'après laquelle on

grava mille autres images de cette divinité. Il assembla dans son palais deux mille et cent religieux et religieuses, chargés d'y lire les livres de la loi de Bouddha. A cette occasion, la cour fut illuminée de deux mille sept cent lanternes.

“ La 4^e des années *Fakoutsi* (653), le Daïri envoya *Kiso-no osani* (Ky szu tchang tan), à la tête d'une ambassade, a *Ko zo kwo té* (Kao tsong houang ti), empereur de la Chine, qui la reçut en audience solennelle. Plusieurs prêtres japonais accompagnaient cette ambassade ; parmi eux se trouvait *Zio yé* (Ting hoei), fils de Kamatari, qui depuis fonda le grand temple de la montagne de *Fafou-no miné-no kaï san* (To wou fung khai chan) dans le Yamato.

“ Les royaumes de Sin ra, de Kôraï et de Fiaksaï faisaient parvenir tous les ans des présents à la cour ; mais c'était peu de chose : le Daïri en fut mécontent. En même temps, on lui annonça qu'un envoyé de Sin ra, vêtu de l'habit chinois, venait d'arriver dans le Tsoukouzi ; l'empereur, irrité le renvoya, parce qu'il n'observait pas les usages du Japon. Kosé-no daïsin avait conseillé de le punir de mort.

“ Ko tok ten o mourut après un règne de 10 ans ; savoir, 5 ans du nengo *Tai kwa*, et 5 de celui de *Fakoutsi*.”—*Annales des Empereurs du Japon*, pp. 47-50.

These extracts supply, I conceive, a fair specimen of the work from which they are taken, and, notwithstanding the extreme frivolity of their contents, may, perhaps, be found worth perusal, as relating to a people of strange habits, and of whom very little is known. Upon the spurious nature of the Annals, down to a comparatively recent period, of which they are ingredients, a few observations will suffice. In the first place, the part of the history of the Chinese which has some foundation to rest on, has been proved not to extend farther back than the close of the twelfth century ; and, therefore, the part of like description of that of the Japanese cannot reach as far, since they, it is admitted, later acquired a knowledge of the art of writing. In the second place, the true portion of the

history of this people does not go back even to the latter end of the thirteenth century; for if it did, and if, at the time of composing their Annals they had records of their own concerning the transactions of so remote a period, they surely would not have had recourse to foreign documents, as it has been shown they had, for the account they have given of the invasion of their country by the troops of Kublai-khan;—an account of more interest and importance than any antecedent part of those Annals. In the third place, the above extracts serve to corroborate the inference drawn from that previously quoted, as to the age of the Annals they belong to; as they afford indications of this work having been written in imitation of, and consequently at a later period than the Chinese records. They betray just the same affected precision with respect to names and dates, as pervades those records; and their *nengo* must obviously have been thence copied, as no two nations could have independently hit upon such unnatural and perplexing measures of time. The story, too, contained in them about the white cock-pheasant, seems to be derived from a Chinese fiction, quoted in a preceding chapter, to which it has a striking resemblance in many respects, and particularly in the absurd importance it represents to have been attached to so very frivolous a subject. These marks of the comparative modernness of the Japanese Annals bear strongly against the truth of their account of ancient transactions; for how can their evidence on such subjects be depended on, when it appears that they were not composed till several ages after the imagined occurrence of the events in question? In the fourth place, the system of chronology adopted in those Annals is wholly incompatible with their truth. The present dynasty is stated in them to have commenced reigning in Japan in the year B. C. 660, that is, two thousand five hundred years ago!—a length of time which far exceeds the bounds of probability, and is quite beyond that assigned to any race of sovereigns in true history. The duration, however, of this dynasty, is nothing in comparison with that of the preceding ones; but as they are styled *mythological*

by M. Klaproth, I shall merely observe respecting them, that where by much the longer portion of a history is confessedly false, there must be great reason to suspect the truth of the remainder. Our author, indeed, asserts, in a passage already adduced from a memoir of his upon the subject, that the Japanese account of the reigning dynasty is, from its very commencement, *veritable*; but the value of this assertion may be judged of, by another which he makes in the next page of the same memoir, to the effect that the first nine hundred and thirty years of this veritable account are all fabulous! Here are his own words: “Jusqu’au commencement du troisième siècle après J. C., l’histoire du Japon est encore fabuleuse, et donne une trop longue durée aux règnes et à la vie des *Dairi*; de sorte que, depuis l’an 660 avant notre ère jusqu’en 270 après cette époque, ou pendant une suite de 930^a ans, elle ne compte que quinze empereurs qui se sont succédés les uns aux autres; nombre trop peu considérable pour un si grand espace de temps.”—*Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, tom. iii. p. 24. Even the ground on which he, in this passage, endeavours to draw a barrier of separation between the spurious and genuine portion of the Japanese Annals, entirely fails him. The first fifteen reigns are admitted to be too long for real history; yet their average length is greatly exceeded by the seventeenth, which, though placed, it seems, on the authentic side of the line of demarcation, is stated to have lasted eighty-seven years, or from 313 to the end of the fourth century of our era. But it is unnecessary to dwell upon these inconsistencies and contradictions: such absurdities, indeed, or others equally glaring, could scarcely be avoided in an attempt to sustain the truth of any portion of the ancient history of Japan.

In the last place, the manner in which the greater part of the history and chronology of this empire, was fabricated, may, I think, be elicited from a circumstance unguardedly mentioned

^a The above number is in the original French text 910, which is obviously a mistake.

by M. Klaproth, in a brief description of a mixed Japanese and Chinese chronological work, which he has given in a subsequent memoir to that above referred to, published in the same periodical. In this work, in which the Chinese cycle of sixty years is made use of, the Japanese and Chinese events that belong to corresponding years of the same cycle, are ranged in the same column, the former at the top of each page, and the latter underneath. But what I wish more particularly to direct attention to, in the compound system thus developed, is the circumstance of its Japanese portion, for the eight cycles immediately preceding the commencement of the space of time allotted to the present dynasty, being only here and there filled up;—a circumstance which clearly proves the Japanese events found in those cycles to have been inserted *ad libitum*, for the purpose of creating some parallelism between the two parts of this system, according to the fancy and caprice of the literati of Japan. For if those writers had drawn their facts, not from imaginary, but from real sources of information, how could they possibly have penetrated through cycles unknown (as indicated by their being left blank), so as to arrive at the events of still remoter cycles? I subjoin the preamble of the memoir in question, together with the passage of it which is here adverted to. “La Bibliothèque du roi possède le premier tome d’un ouvrage chronologique imprimé au Japon, en caractères japonais et chinois. C’est un petit volume in-fol. de 54 feuillets ou 108 pages; il porte le titre chinois de * * * * * *Wo han houang thoung pian nian ho yun thou*, ou, selon la prononciation japonaise, *Wa kan kwô tô fen nen gakf oun-no tsou*, c’est-à-dire, Table arrangée d’après la correspondance des années des règnes des empereurs du Japon et de la Chine. L’auteur est * * * *Ya ghen si* de * * * *Ra ka* ou *Ra simo*. Cet ouvrage n’a ni préface ni frontispice, et on n’y trouve rien qui indique l’année de sa composition, ni celle de sa publication. Il existe pourtant déjà depuis plus de cent ans à la Bibliothèque royale. Chaque page est horizontalement divisée en deux parties, dont la supérieure contient les événements du Japon et

l'inférieure ceux de la Chine. Chaque année cyclique occupe une colonne perpendiculaire."—*Nouveau Journal Asiatique*, tom. xii. pp. 402-3. "A partir de cette année [qui est l'an 1123 avant J. C.], notre auteur consacre à chaque année cyclique une colonne perpendiculaire, dont la partie supérieure est destinée aux événements du Japon, et l'inférieure à ceux de la Chine. Cependant la première *est en général vide*, jusqu'à l'époque de la fondation de la monarchie japonaise par Zin mou ten ô, l'an 660 avant notre ère."—*Ibidem*, pp. 406-7. The proof which the fact here described, affords of the fictitious nature of the Japanese Annals, and of the mode of their fabrication, applies immediately to only the eight cycles preceding the reign of the first emperor of the present dynasty; but it may from analogy be inferred with a high degree of probability, that the greater part of the subsequent history was framed in the same way. That the Japanese should publish their system of history and chronology in a state which so plainly exposes its spurious origin, is certainly very surprising, and tells little in favour of their sagacity. Even the Chinese Board of History, notwithstanding all their blunders, have not been detected in any one so gross as this.

END OF PART II. AND VOL. III.

l'histoire de la Chine. C'est une œuvre d'érudition, une œuvre de persévérance. — *Journal Asiatique*, vol. xli, p. 402-3. "A partir de cette année (qui est l'an 1175 avant J. C.) notre auteur commence à élargir son horizon, et nous fait connaître les pays qui sont au-delà du Japon, et l'histoire de ceux de la Chine. Cependant la première est en général plus exacte que la seconde. — *Journal Asiatique*, p. 402-3. The proof which the fact here described, affords of the scientific nature of the Japanese *Annals*, and of the mode of their fabrication, applies immediately to only the right epoch preceding the reign of the first emperor of the present dynasty; but it may from analogy be inferred with a high degree of probability, that the greater part of the subsequent history was framed in the same way. That the Japanese should publish their account of history and chronology in a state which so plainly exposes its earliest origin, is certainly very surprising, and tells little in favour of their sagacity. Even the Chinese *Shan-shi* of History, notwithstanding all their blunders, have not been detected in any one so gross as this.

/10. 30.





